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MAGAZINE

JANUARY 1988, #129

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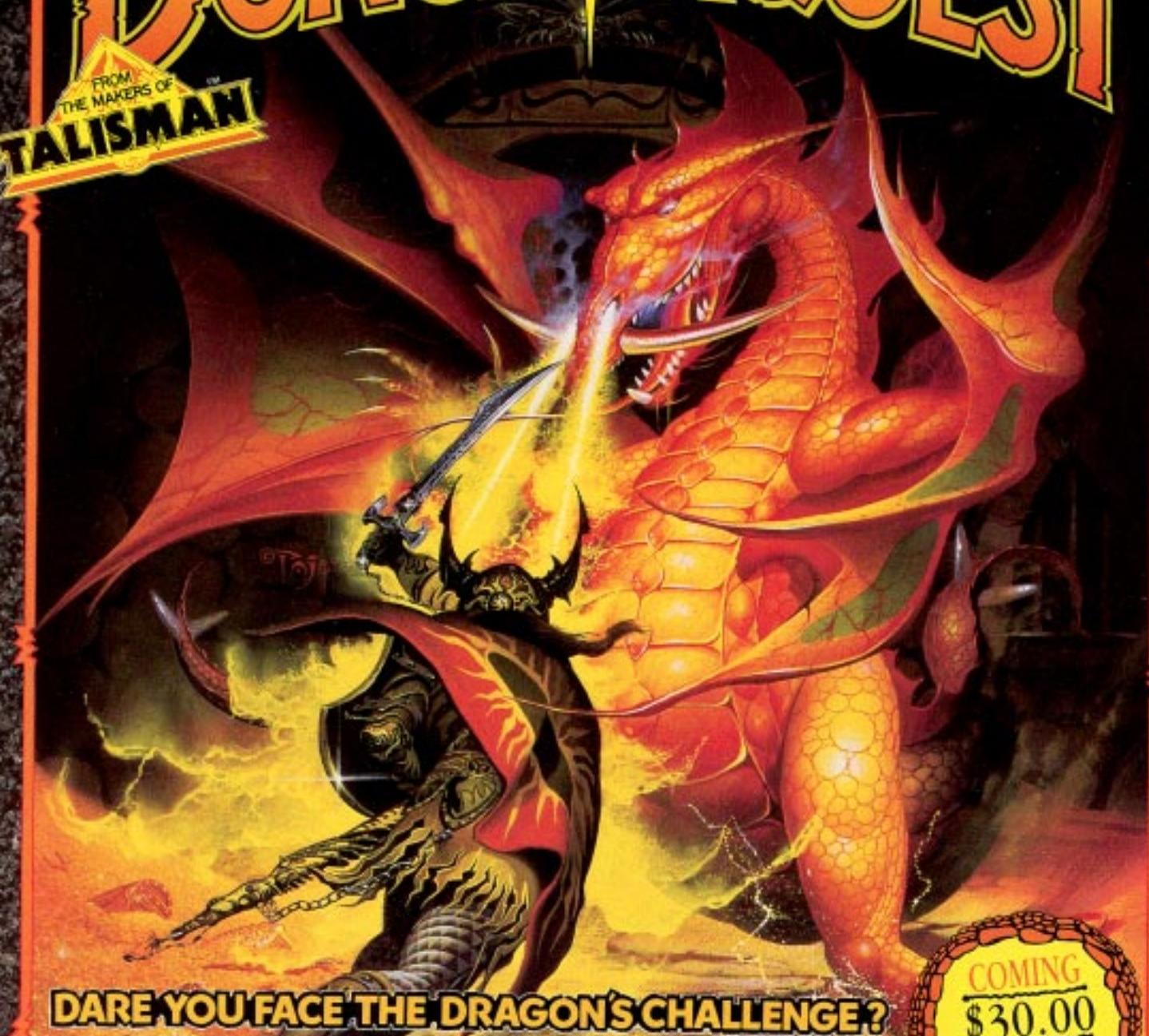


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DUNGEONQUEST

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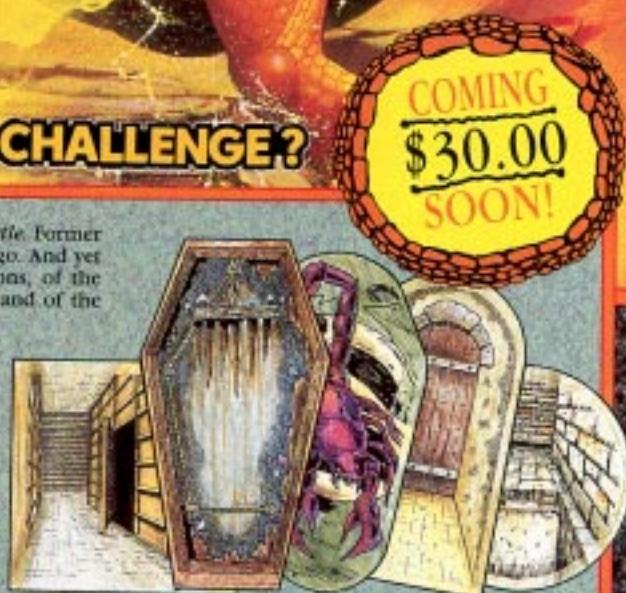
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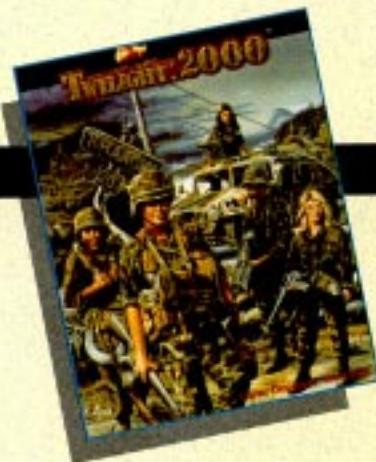
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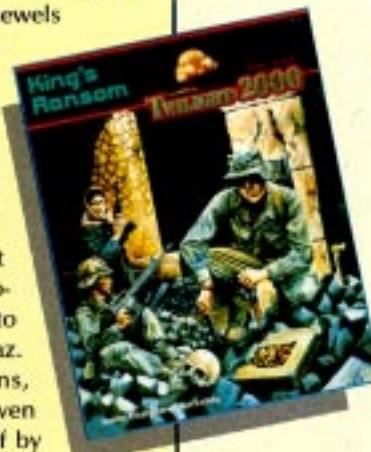
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For years the Iranian Crown Jewels rested in the vaults of the Markasi Bank in Tehran where they backed Iran's legal tender. Members of the National Emergency Council governing Iran in mid-1996 abandoned Tehran and retreated to Esfahan, taking the jewels with them.

In the first half of 1997, the NEC elected to move again, this time from Esfahan to Shiraz. The Iranian Crown Jewels were left behind just long enough for preparations to be made to secure them in Shiraz. Other considerations, such as the fact that even Shiraz became cut off by further Soviet advances, soon occupied the council's collective mind.

But as Esfahan looked in imminent danger of falling to the Soviets, a desperate mission to move the Crown Jewels was launched. The mission never returned. In **King's Ransom**, the players learn that someone has found the jewels, and a desperate race begins to beat the KGB to the hiding place. \$7.00.



GDW Game Designers' Workshop

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Dragon®

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COVER

While their cleric of Thor stands guard, a group of dwarves hauls out (or hides away) their massive chest of treasure. "These guys," said cover artist Keith Parkinson, indicating the dwarves holding the chest, "are basically 'greed dwarves.'" Entitled "The Big Stash," this painting will soon be available as a print. Keith recently won the coveted 1987 Dark Fantasy award at the World Fantasy Convention in Nashville, for his painting "What Do You Mean, We're Lost?" See the advertisement on page 77.

LETTERS

Businesses & books

Dear Dragon:

I have a few questions. Have you ever published an article dealing with PCs owning a small business? If not, I would like to see it covered; if so, what issue was it in?

Also, I enjoy the short stories you often publish in your magazine. Are these from actual novels, or are they stories written for your magazine? Are they available in book form to the public?

Eric Edmonds
Hendersonville TN

We published an article on PCs and businesses in issue #113: "A capital idea," by Vince Garcia. You may find this to be of use in your campaigns. We would welcome any other articles that would add more useful information to the topic.

The short stories written for DRAGON® Magazine are complete within themselves, and generally not excerpts from longer works. The Art of DRAGON Magazine, available early this year from TSR, Inc., has several short stories that previously appeared in this magazine. Future anthologies are being discussed.

Mini-spies

Dear Dragon:

Although I love the D&D® game and other such fantasy games, my personal preference lies in games such as your TOP SECRET® game. In fact, this is my current favorite. A fine job, guys! I am curious as to where a person can find 25mm lead miniatures for the modern spy motif. Is there anybody you know of who produces contemporary miniatures? It is easy to find a horse, worg, or dragon miniature, but just try and locate a Lamborghini Countach or Wellcraft 38' Scarab special edition deep-V! Is there anyone who fashions custom-made miniatures, based on photos and drawings, for a reasonable cost? Please let it be so!

J. Anthony Dixon
Petawawa, Ontario

It would be worthwhile to write for a copy of the TSR Mail Order Hobby Shop catalog if you are not able to find the miniatures you need in your local hobby stores. You might also consider writing directly to the major miniature-figure manufacturers (using the addresses provided in their ads in this magazine) and asking them for a copy of their current catalog, with emphasis on the particular miniature castings you want. You could also discuss pricing for custom-made miniatures with those companies, though you might be better off converting existing miniatures into the shapes you want using a hobby knife, spare parts, and lots of glue (and luck).

So who won?

Dear Dragon:

I am interested in expanding the number of role-playing games that I own and was impressed by your list of ORIGINS '87 winners. I would like to know who won the awards in previous years but am unable to find any lists. How can I find this information?

Also, what do the initials "S.I." stand for in the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game?

Rob Lysy
Windsor, Ontario

Just as we were going to press, we received a call from Anne Jaffe, the chairman of the ORIGINS Awards Committee. She agreed to serve as the point of contact for any gamers who are interested in finding out the previous winners of the various ORIGINS game convention awards. Write to: Anne Jaffe, ORIGINS Awards Committee Chairman, P.O. Box 2712, Fairfax VA 22031. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a reply.

I am reliably informed that the initials "S.I." in the TOP SECRET/S.I. game's title stand for "Special Intelligence." This reflects the elite nature of the game's PC agents.

Name that cover

The request for possible titles for the cover painting of DRAGON issue #127 led to some amusing entries. Among them were:

"Mowing the Front Lawn," from Tim Emrick (Whitestown IN);

"So, Whaddya Think of the Party?" also from Tim Emrick;

"I Still Say It Tastes Great," from Andy Rodich (Emporium PA); and,

"Does the Name 'Custer' Mean Anything to You?" from Aaron Johnson (Houston TX).

Thanks to all who entered.

A number of people continue to express interest in acquiring copies of the cover art for DRAGON Magazine. You may write a letter to an artist, c/o DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. We'll forward the letters as best we can to the artists. Be sure to enclose an SASE for the artist to use in writing back to you.

The name of artist Jeff Menges was misspelled on page 26 of DRAGON® issue # 127. We apologize for the error.

We wish to credit Stephanie Tabat for her excellent DRAGON Magazine logo design, which premiered in issue #128. Thank you, Stephanie!

Close to home

I had the game board set up and most of the pieces out when my uncle came into the kitchen to check out the refrigerator. He wandered over as I was sorting out the American and German counters.

"That one of your war games?" he asked, taking a seat. I nodded and started a new pile for the grenade counters. My first year of college was over, I was with my family at my grandparents, and I looked forward to some goof-off time.

My uncle looked over the board and the designs on the counters. "What's your game about?"

"It's on city fighting in World War II," I explained, still sorting the pieces. "The counters represent one man each, German and American infantry. One player controls each side. It's pretty good."

My uncle nodded again. He watched me work for some time.

"I was at Remagen," he said.

I forgot about the counters and looked up. "When they took the bridge," I said.

"Yeah," he said slowly. "We had to go from house to house. It was pretty terrible." He looked at the board and the piles of counters I had made, then sighed and stood up. "Have fun," he said as he left.

I sat alone and poked a pile of counters with my finger, trying to imagine what it had been like for my uncle at Remagen. It was not a pleasant thought. This was the first time I realized that modern-era board or role-playing games had a special catch to them — they sometimes cut close to home. In some cases, this works to the game's advantage; many gamers enjoy the realistic feel of games depicting the world of the espionage agent, Vietnam-era Ranger, or D-Day general. The more realism, the better.

Of course, if you like modern-era games, you may eventually enter the close-to-home zone. Games on the Vietnam War only became popular in this country in the 1980s, and I recall some of comments, pro and con, that gamers had about them. A small board game on the Falkland Islands war drew great criticism some years ago because it came out very quickly after the war, when the topic was quite touchy. I've lately seen three different role-playing and board games about combat against skyjackers and other terrorists.

(continued on page 19)

The World Gamers Guide

With issue #131 of DRAGON® Magazine, "The World Gamers Guide" will come to a close. We will run the listings in this column until they have appeared for three times, then discontinue the column. No further listings will be taken. Our increased distribution and circulation worldwide are responsible; because of the great increase in international sales, we will soon not be able to cope with the increase in WGG entries with our small staff size.

However, we are always open to submissions for the "Letters" and "Forum" columns, as well as regular gaming articles, and we welcome contributions from anywhere in the world. We also encourage gamers to organize gaming clubs, set up conventions, and use the resources of their local game and hobby stores.

This column had a long run and a good one. We wish all gamers across the world the best this year. Keep gaming!

AD: AD&D® game
BS: BATTLESYSTEM™ Supplement
CC: CALL OF CTHULHU® game
CH: CHAMPIONS™ game
CW: CAR WARS® game
DD: D&D® game
GW: GAMMA WORLD® game
MSH: MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game
OA: AD&D Oriental Adventures system
P: PARANOIA™ game
RQ: RUNEQUEST® game
SF: STAR FRONTIERS® game
SFB: STAR FLEET BATTLES game
SL: SQUAD LEADER® game **T:** TRAVELLER® game
TMNT: TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES® game
TS: TOP SECRET® game
T2000: TWILIGHT: 2000™ game

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FORUM

I am responding to Mr. Barnes's [second] letter in issue #122, specifically to the suggestion that lower-level magic-users be allowed to use weapons and armor to protect their fragile selves, disdaining such crude practices as level, hit points, and spell capability increases. A similar system has been presented, as it was used with the psionicist (which appeared in DRAGON® Magazine in October 1983, issue #78).

I cannot imagine any logical basis for the severity of the restrictions placed on the arms and armor usable by AD&D® game magic-users. I would suggest the following rule changes:

First, allow the magic-user a better weapon selection. This should probably have something to do with the weapon's speed factor; for instance, perhaps a magic-user could use any weapons with a speed factor of 5 or less. This encompasses the more popular sword choices, several blunt weapons, and several missile weapons. A mage can't very well engage in full combat while trying to cast a spell anyway, so why not allow wider choice?

Second, allow the magic-user some armor protection. The casting of a magic-user spell is largely psychic in nature, and the "spell components" only serve to focus the internal/invoked power. Thus, the only restrictions should be on armor that severely impedes the spell's workings. Any armor up to and including chain mail could be worn without interference; after that, you might impose a greater chance of spell failure (it's hard to make finger movements in full plate) or just forbid the bulkier armors altogether. Shields could be used, but not during spell-casting if a somatic component is involved. A small helm could be worn, because it hampers neither the mouth nor the eyes; a great helm, on the other hand, is out of the question.

Third, give the poor guy some hit points! At 1st level, even the slimy, skulking little thief at the rear of the party has a better overall chance of living through the day than the intellectual wizard-to-be. Chances are that the two characters do the same amount (at least initially) of weapon practice. A modified magic-user may begin his career as a cleric-type character, training both materially and magically. Gradually, his physical training takes up less and less of his time as he looks harder and deeper into the world of magic. To mirror this development, we could give him 1d8 at his lower levels (perhaps 1st-3rd, or so), 1d6 later on, 1d4 at the next few levels, and finally a mere 1 hp bonus every level. Also, the attack tables could be modified to reflect this training at lower levels, but some might say that's going overboard.

Of course, some will state that "game balance" is better served by a wimpy, easily killable magic-user. But how easily we forget the example of the cleric, who instead of being represented by a robed, unarmed friar who heals the sick by the grace of his god, is almost as formidable a warrior as the fighter or cavalier, and still hurls potentially deadly spells to boot! The magic-user (and possibly the illusionist as well) should not be forced to face these inequalities

any longer. Since magic-users are undoubtedly the most interesting and best-loved of all character classes, it's hard to believe that nobody has recognized sooner the unfair discrimination built into the game.

Scott Whitmore
Kissimmee FL

The debate, I see, is on again! What to do about the "poor, defenseless" magic-user? Issue #122's "Forum" had a raft of letters on various aspects of the plight of the mage. Some of the solutions were good, others were poor.

In her letter, Ms. McGuire offered a well-thought out replacement for the now outdated Intelligence Table II as well as an ingenious answer to the problem arising from a mage's inability to learn a given spell. Her solutions do not affect game balance, and add more versatility and cohesion to the magic-user class.

Mr. Barnes, on the other hand, offers some dangerous solutions. The difficulties involved in playing a low-level mage center mostly on the PCs' ineffectuality as regards number of spells and combat. These are recurring themes in the ongoing debate over 1st-level magic-users, and Barnes's letter is no different.

First, to the idea of giving mages spell bonuses a la the cleric's wisdom, I can only say one thing to DMs who are thinking of trying it: "Don't!" I ran a campaign for a year like that and, while things started out just fine, they quickly fell apart as the mages advanced in level. Consider that a mage with an intelligence of 18, upon reaching 5th level will, with bonuses, have seven first-level spells, four second-level spells, and two third-level spells! If Mr. Barnes believes that this will encourage the use of some of the minor spells, he is mistaken: in my campaign, mages invariably loaded up with a handful of *magic missiles* (at two missiles each), some *web* spells, and a couple of *fireballs* or *lightning bolts*. Other minor spells were added to fill out the mage's capacity, but they weren't needed as the PC could effectively blast to bits just about anything a 5th-level character might meet. In addition, mages with these bonuses are wont to become "ball hogs" and steal a lot of the other PCs' thunder.

To the proposed use of armor for mages, again I say "No!" If a player wants a mage with armor, he can choose fighter/magic-user or cleric/magic-user options. Additional weaponry might not be harmful, as long as hand-to-hand weapons are not promoted. My campaign allows bows as a choice of weapons for mages, as they do not necessarily require a great deal of strength. This keeps the unarmored mage out of melee, but allows an option for greater involvement. But if you give the additional weapon proficiencies to your magic-users, be prepared to allow them to keep them. A player whose PC must give up a spell or weapon is not going to feel very good about it.

The point involving the ability to cast one spell a day, but choosing which one to cast "on the fly," was intriguing as it is often very difficult for

a mage to pick the proper spell in advance; but Mr. Barnes did not elaborate on this option. Another possibility is to relax the requirements for relearning spells. Allowing a mage to relearn a spell in a couple of hours while the party rests will allow greater flexibility on the part of the mage without creating too deadly a character.

The most unfortunate aspect of Mr. Barnes's letter is what seems to be a lack of understanding of the personality of the magic-user class. The picture of the magic-user as a "one-charge magical item," "cowering and cringing," etc., and who, after casting a spell, has companions with "little incentive to further risk their necks on his behalf" is not a picture of a mage, a wizard, a sorceress.

The magic-user is a class of power, arcane and mysterious. Any 1st-level character who can drop eight goblins from 30' in one round without even breaking into a sweat (using a *sleep* spell) will command a great deal of respect, even admiration, from comrades. The mage may be "woefully unprepared" for defense with *weapons*, but this is the nature of wizards. Huddled over strange tomes through the night, constantly in search of new incantations, the mage has tasted power, is imbued with it, and wants more. The mage becomes somewhat otherworldly, not completely of this plane. This is the personality of the class and, while some magic-users may indeed cower and cringe, others will take pride in their arcane skills, perhaps even delight in the fear which they may instill in mundane folk.

Kurt R.A. Giambastiani
Bellevue WA

W. Brian Barnes has a few points concerning the problems of low-level magic-users in his letter in issue #122. [However,] these limits were put in to let high-level magic-users become powerful without becoming omnipotent.

If low-level magic-users can have certain cantrips permanently usable (without need of memorizing them or taking up spell capacity), why shouldn't high-level magic-users be permitted to get a few first- and second-level spells the same way without using the *permanency* spell or acquiring the penalties the use of a *permanency* spell requires? It would sure be nice to be able to cast an unlimited number of *magic missiles* in addition to having all the spells a magic-user is normally allowed to have. And why should a game be balanced if game balance keeps me or W. Brian from having a powerful character?

I'm being sarcastic, but it is true. The typical wizard or higher-level magic-user is a very powerful character. (And when the magic-user and illusionist are combined into the sorcerer class next year, look out.) It is not that difficult to raise a low-level magic-user to higher level, unless you put the magic-user into the thick of battle.

With a bit of common sense (leaving combat to the hit-point factories, etc.), your character will survive without too much difficulty. Once you've gone through an adventure, use your share of the treasure sensibly.

A PC with enough cash to buy six first-level scrolls after an adventure usually buys six different spells and puts all six into his book. Try this instead: Buy two spells to add to your book and get two *magic missile* and *armor* scrolls each for use in the next adventure. You've tripled your offensive capacity and should be able to take more damage. If you have to play a combat machine, you now can.

(It should also be noted that scrolls are usually
(continued on page 51)



Demi-humans

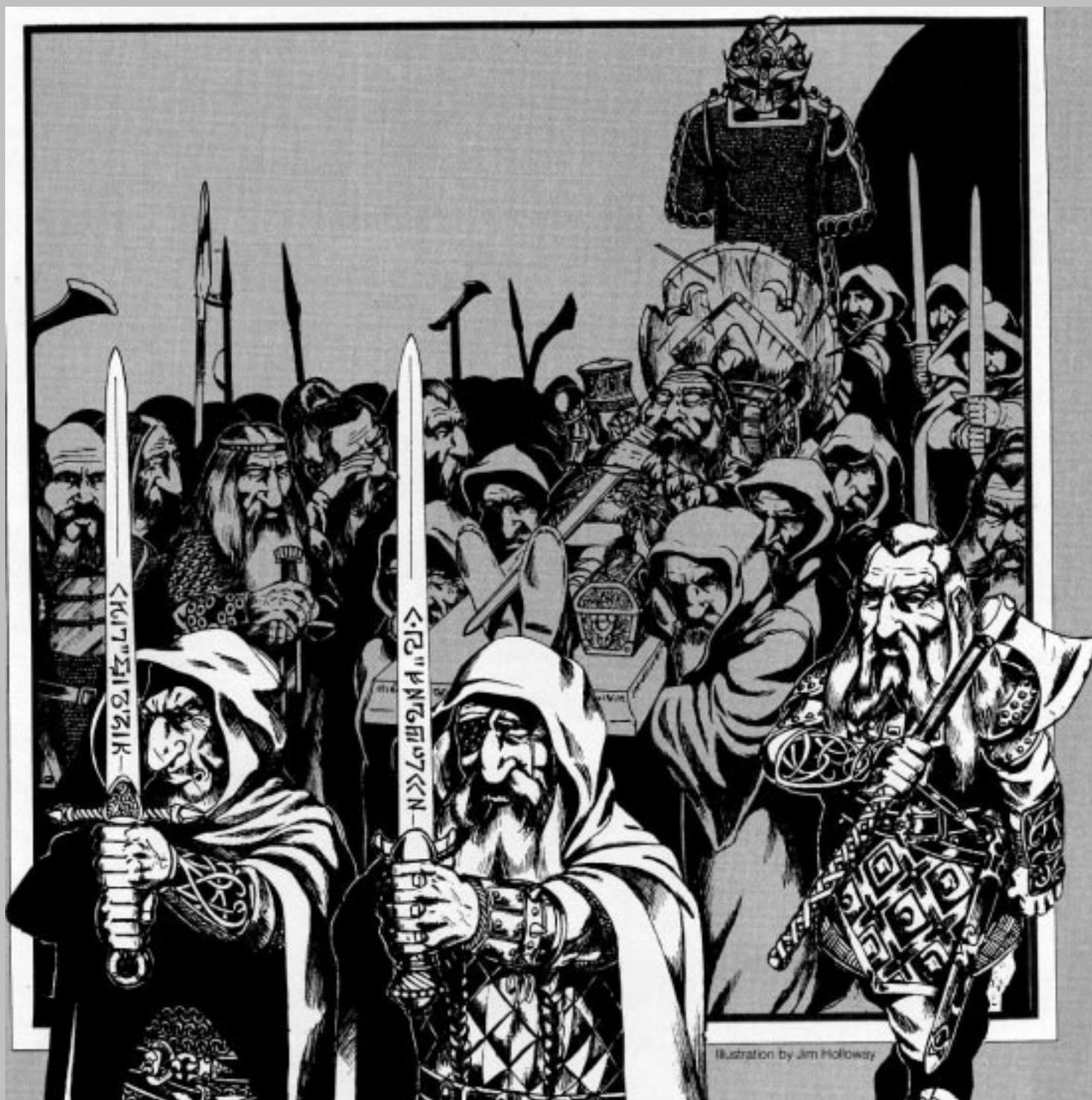


Illustration by Jim Holloway



DANIEL J. HORNE



Arcane Lore

Magic of the dwarven priests

by Len Carpenter

One of the many overlooked fields of magic in the AD&D® game concerns *dwarven* magic. Dwarves are not commonly thought of as a magic-using race, but rather as hardy warriors or mechanically minded thieves. Now that dwarven clerics are permitted as a PC class, it's time to explore the special types of magic mastered by dwarven clerics to promote the aims and needs of the dwarven race.

The general list of cleric spells is inadequate for describing the special areas of magic of great interest to dwarven clerics. Dwarves have little desire to use spells that animate dead creatures or command snakes and insects. Dwarves need spells that work directly to satisfy the needs of the race — magic useful in mining, crafting, construction, and command over the substances of the earth. Clerics of the dwarven race play a special role in their society, and their spells should be suited for the demands of dwarvenkind.

Indeed, dwarven clerics hold a unique place in their community, as they are the only spell-casting class known to the dwarven race. Because of this monopoly on magic, dwarven clerics hold greater power in their society than most other spell-casting groups hold in other cultures.

Dwarven clerics are more than just combat medics and religious leaders to their people. They are scholars of dwarven learning, teachers of lore and history, and preservers of dwarven art and culture. Dwarven high priests are creators of mighty magical items and weapons, consecrators of holy ground, founders of new communities, seekers of mineral resources, and defenders of dwarven strongholds and homeland. The most renowned dwarven priests of history and legend may be wise sages, skilled artisans, dedicated physicians, or mighty warrior-priests.

Elder clerics hold a position in dwarven society that inspires deep reverence and awe. Their centuries of experience give them a wisdom and understanding that short-lived humans can only scarcely

comprehend. Only the most steadfast dedication to the dwarven gods and to lawful dwarven society can enable a dwarven cleric to attain the exalted levels required to be able to cast the powerful 6th- and 7th-level magic spells. Dwarven high priests who rise to high experience levels command enormous respect and authority in their culture.

Just as druids have a special place in the sunlit world to protect the fields and forests, so too do dwarven clerics have their special charges. Dwarven clerics have a deep, heartfelt veneration for the earth and stone of the dwarven homeland. Dwarves view earthly rock as druids view living plants and animals. Stone, metal, and minerals are not simply inanimate substances to be exploited and callously manipulated, but are living things to be cherished, protected, and preserved. Thoughtless and careless use of the resources of the earth is a great blasphemy. Careless, haphazard mining and destruction of the earth are as immoral to a dwarf as hewing down a whole forest for lumber is to an elf.

Dwarves do not speak of crudely exploiting mineral resources, but of cultivating the bounty of the earth. Dwarven homes and strongholds are not carved out of mountains in the quickest or easiest manner, but are designed so that stone and earth are sculpted and shaped to best display the great beauty and divine art of the earth. Dwarves do not dig out gems or metal ores from the earth in a haphazard, thoughtless manner; mines are created with long-term use and enjoyment in mind. A dwarf does not talk of repairing damage to stone walls or earthen ramparts, but of healing damage to the flesh and bones of the world. Great caverns are especially prized as homelands, and many ancient dwarven enclaves are built into vast cave systems.

Dwarven clerical spells

The full range of spells in the clerical spell list is not available to dwarven clerics because there are spell areas of little concern to dwarves. Dwarves have little con-

tact with the great outdoors. The natural world of green, growing plants and wild animals is generally foreign to them. Spells dealing with nature are usually limited to the typical dwarven environment of hills and mountains. Spells that influence snakes and insects do not interest dwarves; as a result, dwarven deities will not bestow such spells to their clerics. Speaking with plants or playing with magical rainbows are not ways in which dwarves like to spend their time.

Dwarven clerics have a great antipathy toward the dark arts of necromancy. Animating dead creatures to create mindless slaves may be considered useful by some clerics, but it is an appalling concept to dwarves. In another vein, feigning death to fool an enemy is a coward's trick, and no self-respecting dwarf would attempt the feat. Only in healing is "necromancy" valuable.

Dwarves have only limited interest in the substances and beings of the higher planes. The only elemental planes to draw the attention of dwarves are the planes of Earth, Fire, and Magma, for obvious reasons. The plane of Air does not concern dwarves, and no dwarven cleric would summon a dust devil or aerial servant. Walking on air or transforming into a cloud of vapor does not impress an earthbound dwarf.

Spells normally prohibited to dwarven clerics are listed on Table 1. Only in extraordinary circumstances would a dwarven deity grant any of these spells to one of his clerics.

Of all the different forms of magic in the AD&D game world, dwarves are most interested in magic that affects the material resources of the earth. Dwarves cherish magic that gives them control over earth, stone, metals, and minerals. Spells that can shape stone or move soil are very useful in mining and construction. Spells that can bestow characters with some of the qualities associated with the earth are also of interest to dwarves. At the highest spell levels, spells that can conjure up stone or metal structures or can summon extraplanar beings of use in mining or the

forging of items are strongly desired by dwarven clerics. On the whole, dwarves are more skilled with earth-related magic than any other race.

Additionally, dwarven clerics are very adept with all forms of rune-magic. Dwarves employ protective runes, glyphs, and symbols to protect property or help defend dwarven fortifications. Dwarves employ runestones as a common material component for divination spells. The somatic components of many dwarven spells are runes inscribed in the air with hand or holy symbol. Dwarves have knowledge of runes or symbols unavailable to other clerics, and they use common glyphs to a greater effect than any other type of priest. [*The use of runestones among dwarves in the FORGOTTEN REALM™ setting is described by Ed Greenwood in "Runestones," in the Best of DRAGON® Magazine Anthology Vol. IV.*]

Spell alterations

To reflect the likes and dislikes of dwarven clerics in the magic they use, some changes should be made in the specifics of certain clerical spells. Some spells cast by dwarven clerics are more powerful than when cast by other clerics, especially those spells that influence the earth. Other spells cast by dwarves are less effective than for most clerics. These changes are noted below.

Combine: This spell is often employed to boost the power of spells used for the benefit of the dwarven community. *Combine* is also used as an integral part of the spell-casting process of certain powerful spells, which are described in the list of new spells given later. The number of clerics linked by a *combine* spell to cast one of these new spells usually depends on which number is deemed lucky or magical by the dwarven community. The number of clerics linked by *combine* may exceed five if the magic number is greater than five, but the power rise of the cast spell cannot exceed the limit described in *Unearthed Arcana*.

Magic stone: Any stone or pebble enchanted by a dwarven cleric is +2 "to hit" and does 2 hp damage when it strikes.

Potent: If dwarven runestones (see the new second-level spell, *enchant runestones*, discussed later) are used in the casting of this spell, the casting time is reduced to one round. The runestones are tossed on the ground as the spell is cast, then the runestones are read to tell the result of the *potent*.

Augury: If enchanted runestones are used when casting this spell, the stones add a +10% bonus to the chance of correct divination.

Messenger: This spell is only effective in a hilly or mountainous area, or an environment otherwise similar to the dwarven cleric's homeland. Only a creature native to hills, mountains, or caverns may be summoned by this spell; this list includes creatures such as badgers, moles, moun-

tain goats, rams, or birds native to the hills. Dwarven clerics have little influence over animals of other environments.

Speak with animals: If the cleric is communicating with a creature of an environment foreign to the dwarf, then the duration of this spell is only one round/level, and the cleric's charisma score is reduced by two points to determine the animal's reaction roll.

Spiritual hammer: This spell is a great favorite with dwarves, but they don't want to expend a continuing stream of good hammers to employ this spell. Instead of a regular hammer, a miniature hammer (1 gp cost) is used with this spell; this component disappears at the end of the spell-casting. If a magic hammer is used as an emergency component by the dwarven cleric, it adds no additional "to hit" or damage bonus to the spell, but will not disappear. The spell's duration is extended by one round for dwarven clerics.

Glyph of warding: Because of the dwarven skill with rune-magic, any glyph created by a dwarven cleric acts as if cast by a cleric of one experience level higher.

Meld into stone: The duration of this spell is 11-20 (1d10 +10) rounds for a dwarven cleric.

Speak with dead: Because of the innate dwarven antipathy for necromancy, this spell is only bestowed by a dwarven god when the spell's use will benefit dwarvenkind during a time of great peril. The cleric casting this spell is treated as being one level lower in experience, due to the lack of skill dwarves have with this sort of magic.

Divination: If dwarven runestones are used with this spell, the chance of correct divination increases by 10%.

Plane shift: Use of this spell by dwarven clerics is often limited to those few planes with which dwarves have common contact. Dwarves only shift to the inner planes of Earth, Fire, and Magma, and the only Outer Plane of interest to dwarves is the home plane of the dwarven gods. A cleric may, of course, *plane shift* an opponent to an inhospitable plane.

Spike stones: The spikes created by a dwarven cleric inflict 1-6 hp base damage for each spike that hits a creature.

Animate object: If the object to be animated is made of earth, stone, metal, or mineral, then up to two cubic feet/level may be animated.

Conjure animals: Only animals commonly found in a hilly or mountainous setting may be conjured. Using the *conjured animals* table on page 222 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, the following animals are the only ones that may be conjured: wild dogs, badgers, giant badgers, war dogs, giant goats, mountain lions, mules, wolves, wolverines, black bears, giant beavers, giant eagles, giant owls, giant rams, giant weasels, dire wolves, giant otters, giant skunks, giant wolverines, brown bears, giant porcupines, or cave bears. No animal of the 9-HD cate-

gory or greater can be conjured by this spell.

Stone tell: The duration of this spell is two turns, allowing a dwarf more time to acquire detailed information.

Control weather: Because dwarves often have little regard for the weather conditions of the great outdoors, this spell is seldom used. A dwarven cleric generally only casts this spell to provide cover for a military operation (fog), to make conditions harder for an enemy (rain or snow to hinder movement, sunshine to pester humanoids), or to summon an electrical storm in preparation for casting a *lightning water* spell (see new spells). If cast in an environment foreign to a dwarven cleric, the spell duration is reduced by one-half.

Earthquake: For dwarves, this is a spell of last resort, since dwarves have such a deep revulsion for damage and destruction to the earth. If used against a great enemy in desperation, the spell acts as if cast by a cleric of two levels higher as the control dwarves have over the earth.

Gate: This spell is usually limited to the same planes discussed under the *plane shift* notes.

Symbol: As dwarves are so skilled with rune-magic, dwarven clerics are able to use all the symbols described under the eighth-level magic-user spell, save for *symbols of death* and *stunning*.

Spells from other sources

Certain magic spells from other spell lists would seem proper for dwarves to employ. Spells useful in the day-to-day projects and pursuits of the race are adapted from the magic-user and wu jen spell lists. These suggested spells are given in Table 2. Beside each spell in Table 2 is an abbreviation that shows the original list from which the spell came and the original spell level. Magic-user (MU) spells come from the spell lists in the *Players Handbook* or *Unearthed Arcana*, while all wu jen (WJ) spells come from *Oriental Adventures*. This tabulated information is supported by notes on or recommended changes in the spells, as follows:

Magnetism: This spell cannot be cast on other characters.

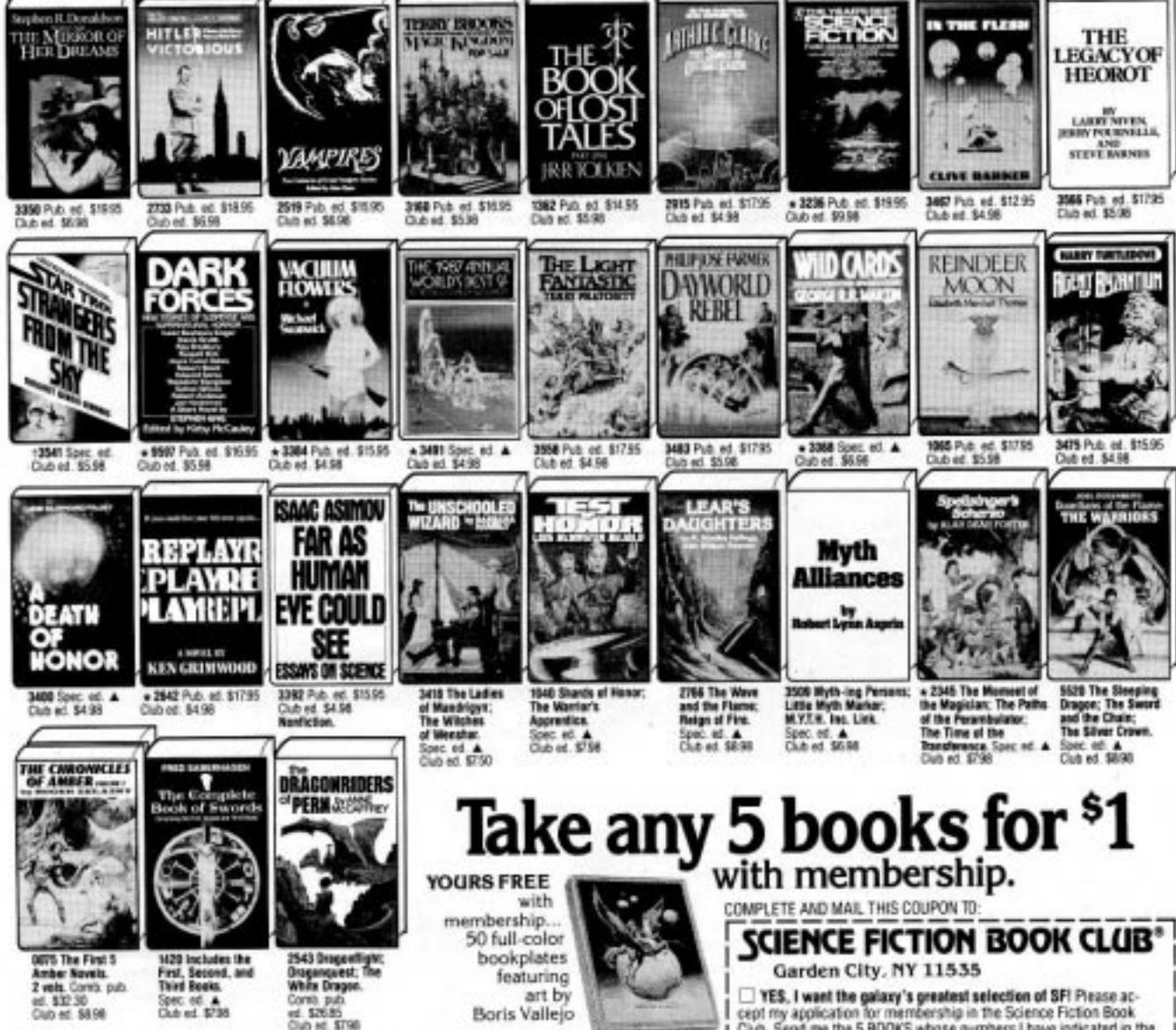
Melt metal: The material component for this spell is a ruby chip worth 100 gp.

Metal skin: The material component for this spell is a strip of metal foil wrapped about the cleric's wrist.

Rust to metal: The reverse of this spell, *metal to rust*, is never cast by dwarven clerics.

Stone to flesh: This spell can only be used in limited circumstances. *Stone to flesh* can only be used to restore a stoned creature back to its original flesh-and-blood form. The spell cannot be used to turn stone or earthen substance into a fleshy mass. The reverse of this spell, *flesh to stone*, can only be used to reverse the effect of a *stone to flesh* spell that has

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turned original stone matter to a mass of flesh.

Warp stone: This spell sees only restricted use by dwarven clerics, since they are so loath to damage good stonework unless a good reason can be found for the spells use.

Elemental servant: Only a fire or earth elemental may be summoned with this spell; dwarves have no interest in the beings of the planes of Air or Water. The duration of the specified task to be done can last no more than one day per two levels of the cleric.

New clerical spells

Below are 14 new spells that may be cast by dwarven clerics. The spells should be introduced into the campaign a few at a time, through new scrolls discovered or a special bestowal by a dwarven deity. When cast by an NPC cleric encountered during play, one of these new spells can provide a novel surprise. Some of these new spells may be known only through machines created or runes conjured in the distant past, and so may provide useful adventure background material.

Detect Harmful Gas (Divination)

Level: 1 Components: V,S,M
Range: 0 CT: 1 round
AE: 6"-diam. sphere ST: None
Duration: 1 turn + 1/2 turn/level

Explanation/Description: Useful in mining and underground exploration, this spell enables the caster to detect the presence of harmful gas in a sphere 6" in diameter around the caster. The primary use of this spell is to detect underground hazardous natural gases such as explosive methane or poisonous sulphur dioxide, or fire-caused gases like carbon monoxide, but this spell can also detect any other harmful gas that occurs naturally or is produced by alchemy or magic. Although this spell always reveals the presence of such gas, there is only a 5% chance per level of experience of the caster to identify the specific type of gas found (e.g., chlorine gas, methane, or carbon monoxide). Some rare, exotic gases may be beyond a cleric's ability to identify exactly, although the identification roll may indicate the possible danger from or effect of the gas. The material component of this spell is the cleric's holy symbol.

Detect Metal and Minerals (Divination)

Level: 1 Components: V,S,M
Range: 12" CT: 1 round
Duration: 1 turn ST: None
AE: 1" -wide path

Explanation/Description: This spell is similar in effect to the *wand of metal and mineral detection*. The caster concentrates on finding a specific type of metal or mineral. If the substance is within a path 12" long by 1" wide, the exact location and approximate quantity of the metal or mineral is revealed. The caster may try to detect different substances throughout the

duration of the spell, one different type of metal or mineral per round. Metals and minerals of all types may be found, and a determination may be made of whether they are in a pure, refined form or whether they occur as a raw ore. The caster can move at a walking rate and still concentrate on the spell, but cannot engage in strenuous activity and maintain the spell. The material component for this spell is the cleric's holy symbol.

Enchant Runestones (Alteration-Evocation)

Level: 2 Components: V,S,M
Range: 1" CT: 1 turn
Duration: Perm. ST: None
AE: 6-20 stones

Explanation/Description: With this spell, a dwarf may prepare a set of runestones used in divination spells such as *portent*, *augury*, or *divination*. The cleric takes a set of 6 to 20 stones and engraves special dwarven runes on each stone. The exact number of stones and specific runes inscribed vary with the religion or homeland of the cleric. A bless spell is then cast upon the runestones, followed by the *enchant runestones* spell. The runestones can now be used to improve the chance of a correct divination with such a spell. A cleric often carries the runestones in a leather pouch wherever he or she travels.

When a divination spell is cast, the stones are tossed upon the ground and read as part of the divination process. The reading of the runestones provides greater accuracy with a divination spell, the exact gain in accuracy varying from spell to spell. The runestones do not disappear at the end of the spell-casting, and so can be used over and over again.

Forge Fire (Alteration)

Level: 2 Components: V,S,M
Range: 2" CT: 1 round
Duration: 3 turns/lvl. ST: None
AE: Single forge or furnace

Explanation/Description: This spell enables a dwarf to create a strong, efficient fire in a forge or furnace without burning up large quantities of fuel. Only a small bundle of sticks or a single lump of coal is needed to start a *forge fire*. Thereafter, the fire burns without need for more fuel for the duration of the spell. This spell only works in a smithy forge or smelting furnace which was magically prepared to accept the spell by having had a *prayer* spell cast upon it by a dwarven cleric when the forge or furnace was built. No harmful gases are given off by the use of this spell.

The power and heat of the fire increases with the level of the caster, so metals that are harder and have higher melting points can be melted by a *forge fire* cast by higher-level clerics. A list of typical metals that can be melted by a *forge fire* spell cast by a cleric of a given level follows:

3rd level: Lead, zinc, tin.

5th level: Copper, silver, gold, brass,

bronze, electrum.

7th level: Iron, common steel alloys, meteoritic-steel alloy.

9th level: Mithral-steel alloy, platinum.

16th level: Adamantite-steel alloy.

The material components for this spell include the bundle of sticks or lump of coal used as starter fuel and a pinch of sulphur. [See "Fire for Effect!" in DRAGON issue #123 for further information on metals.]

Earth Sense (Divination)

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M
Range: 0 CT: 1 round
Duration: 3 turns/lvl. ST: None
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: This spell empowers a cleric to key his senses into the surrounding earth or stone structure to monitor the conditions of the area. This spell can be used to monitor all the earth and stone in a spherical volume with a radius of 1" per level of the caster. The cleric is then able to note anything unusual or important happening within the area of effect through a vague feeling of unease or impending danger. Once the feeling is experienced, the cleric may try to concentrate on determining the specific thing that has set off the feeling of alarm. The chance of identifying the specific event is 5% per level of the caster. Only one identification roll can be made for each event that may trigger the feeling. If the roll fails, the cleric is unable to determine the exact problem, but does identify the general area where the problem is occurring.

Once the spell is cast, the dwarven cleric must remain quietly in place to continue concentrating on the spell. If the cleric moves more than 10' from the spot where the spell was cast or engages in strenuous activity such as melee, the spell is broken.

Many different things may set off the feeling of alarm. Digging or sapping in the area, movements by burrowing creatures, spells or magic that currently affect the earth, nonsilent movement across the earth or through a nearby passage, strenuous physical activity (such as melee) occurring on a section of the earth, or an impending natural disaster are all things that can trigger the sense of alarm. A natural disaster that sets off the alarm could be unstable geological conditions that foreshadow a mine collapse or natural earthquake, a natural gas pocket about to explode, or volcanic or geyser activity that could become dangerous.

Dwarven clerics often maintain a line of sentries in a stronghold and use this spell to monitor anything that may signal an impending attack. Clerics might note a section of castle wall being undermined, an attempt to batter through a castle gate, invaders scaling a fortress wall, or a *passwall* spell suddenly cast upon a section of stone wall. The material components for this spell are the cleric's holy symbol

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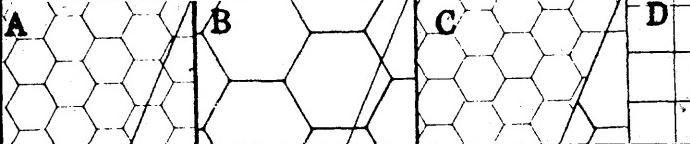
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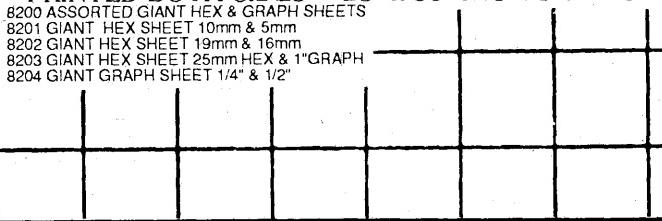
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and a small sample of earth or stone from the area to be monitored.

Lightning Water (Conjuration/ Summoning, Alteration)

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M
Range: 1" CT: 5 rounds
Duration: Special ST: None
AE: 2 cubic feet of water/level

Explanation/Description: This spell enables a dwarven cleric to cause a quantity of water to become infused with the magical spirit of the lightning. The water is then used in the forging or creation of certain items to improve the quality of the goods. To prepare the water, a trough or container made of fine wood inlaid with silver decorations must be constructed. The container must be made from materials worth no less than 5,000 gp. The container is then *blessed* by a dwarven cleric. Thereafter, the container can be used any number of times to collect lightning water.

The water-filled trough is first placed outdoors. The *lightning water* spell is then cast over the water, and the trough is left out overnight to capture the spirit of the lightning from a nighttime thunderstorm (either natural or summoned). If no storm occurs, the spell is wasted. Once the lightning-spirit is captured by the water, the water itself is not electrified, nor is the water dangerous to touch; instead, the water is simply infused with the magical potential and spiritual strength of the lightning.

When the water is retrieved the next morning, it holds its lightning-spirit charge for 12 hours or until the water is used up in the smithy. The lightning water is used in the forging of weapons, armor, or metal goods to improve the quality of the items or to prepare them for magical enchantment. To treat items, two cubic feet of water is necessary for each piece of metal jewelry or other small item crafted, six cubic feet of water for each weapon, and 12 cubic feet of water for each suit of armor.

The lightning water removes imperfections, strengthens metal, and generally makes the items superior in quality. Metal jewelry crafted with lightning water becomes one category better in value (see the table of jewelry values on page 26 of the DMG). All metal items, weapons, and armor crafted with lightning water make a saving throw to avoid damage at +1 (see the Saving Throw Matrix on page 80 of the DMG).

When an item crafted with lightning water is to be enchanted by dwarven clerics, there is a 2% cumulative chance per day of the item becoming magically enchanted (DMG, page 118). Using the *lightning water* spell before an item is to become enchanted is a standard practice with clerics of the dwarven race.

The material components for this spell are a miniature, silver lightning rod (worth at least 500 gp) and a vial of holy water sprinkled into the trough of water to be ensorcelled.

Pillar of Borogar (Alteration)

Level: 4 Components: V,S,M
Range: 3" CT: 7 segments
Duration: 1 rnd/lvl. ST: None
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: This spell, first bestowed to the ancient, dwarven high priest Borogar, causes a pillar of earth to erupt upward from the ground. The pillar rises up from a surface of earth, stone, sand, or clay, but not from any other substance. The height of the pillar can be controlled by the caster, and can be raised or lowered at will (in the same manner as an elevator is controlled). The pillar can be controlled while the caster is atop the pillar or beside it, as long as the caster is within 30' of the pillar. The pillar can attain a height of 10' per level of the caster. The pillar's height can rise or fall at the rate of 60' per round (10' per segment). The pillar's width is normally 10' in diameter, but can be doubled to 20' in diameter by reducing the pillar's height by one-half. It takes one round to alter the pillar's diameter in this way.

A pillar can rise vertically only – never horizontally or diagonally. A pillar can break through wooden flooring or roofing slate of no greater than 1" in thickness. In this way, a pillar may be used as a vertical battering ram against light, thin materials.

The *pillar of Borogar* might also be used to create a small, temporary islet in a marsh or shallow pool of water if the pillar can rise from the ground below the water to reach the surface. The pillar begins not from the upper level of the ground, but from 10' below the ground, where the earth is more solid and not muddy.

The pillar can be destroyed by casting a *transmute rock to mud* spell at its earthen base, an attack by a water elemental, precipitation equal in strength to a tropical storm, or by any other means to turn the pillar's earthen base into muck and mire. The material component for this spell is a small cylinder made of earth or clay.

Restore Earth (Alteration)

Level: 4 Components: V,S,M
Range: Touch CT: 1 round
Duration: 1 rnd./lvl. ST: None
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: This spell, a more powerful version of the *stone shape* spell, allows a dwarven cleric to heal damage to an earthen structure. Once the spell is cast, the structure restores itself toward its original condition gradually over a period of time. The spell remains in effect for as many rounds as the cleric has levels of experience. The spell heals damage to stone, earth, or metal at the rate of one point of structural damage per round. Thereafter, the repair to the earthen structure is permanent (unless the structure is damaged again, of course). If the structure is totally destroyed or demolished, the spell has no effect. The spell cannot restore a castle wall that has been battered

into rubble or an iron gate that has been smashed to pieces. The material component for this spell is a piece of clay with iron fillings mixed into it, which is then shaped to resemble the original appearance of the structure to be repaired.

Commune with Earth (Divination)

Level: 5 Components: V,S,M
Range: 0 CT: 1 turn
Duration: Special ST: None
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: This spell enables the dwarven cleric to become one with his environment. The cleric is able to learn one fact about the surrounding area for each level of experience he has, in much the same manner as the druid's *commune with nature* spell. This spell is only effective in the typical dwarven environment of rocky mountains or hills, or underground caverns or mines. The spell operates in a radius of one-half mile per level of the cleric and to a depth of one-quarter mile per level. The material components needed are the cleric's holy symbol and a bit of earth, rock, or clay.

Mother Lode (Divination)

Level: 5 Components: V,S,M
Range: 0 CT: 3 turns
Duration: Special ST: None
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: This spell is a more powerful version of the *detect metal and minerals* spell. With this spell, a dwarven cleric can locate a major ore deposit of any metal or mineral. When the spell is cast, the type of deposit to be located must be specified. Only one type of deposit may be divined per casting of the spell. Furthermore, the material component employed in the spell must pertain to the type of deposit sought. For example, a tiny iron anvil is required to find the location of an iron ore deposit, while a diamond must be expended to locate a diamond mine. The cost of the material component must be comparable to the value of the deposit to be found. Typical material components will cost 1,000 gp for base metals, 5,000 gp for precious metals or gemstones, or 10,000 gp for very rare metals such as mithral or adamantine.

Once the spell is cast, there is a 100% chance of finding the deposit if the deposit is within the area of effect of the spell. The DM must decide whether such a deposit is present because the DM is the only one who knows the geology of his game world. Obviously, the rarer the substance, the less chance there is of the deposit being present. If the DM wishes to leave the decision of whether the ore is present up to chance, he may use the following percentages: 60% chance for finding a desired base metal, 30% chance for a precious metal ore or gemstone deposit, 5% for a very rare substance, and 5% for no substance whatsoever. The spell detects the desired deposit in a radius of 10 miles per level of the caster and to a

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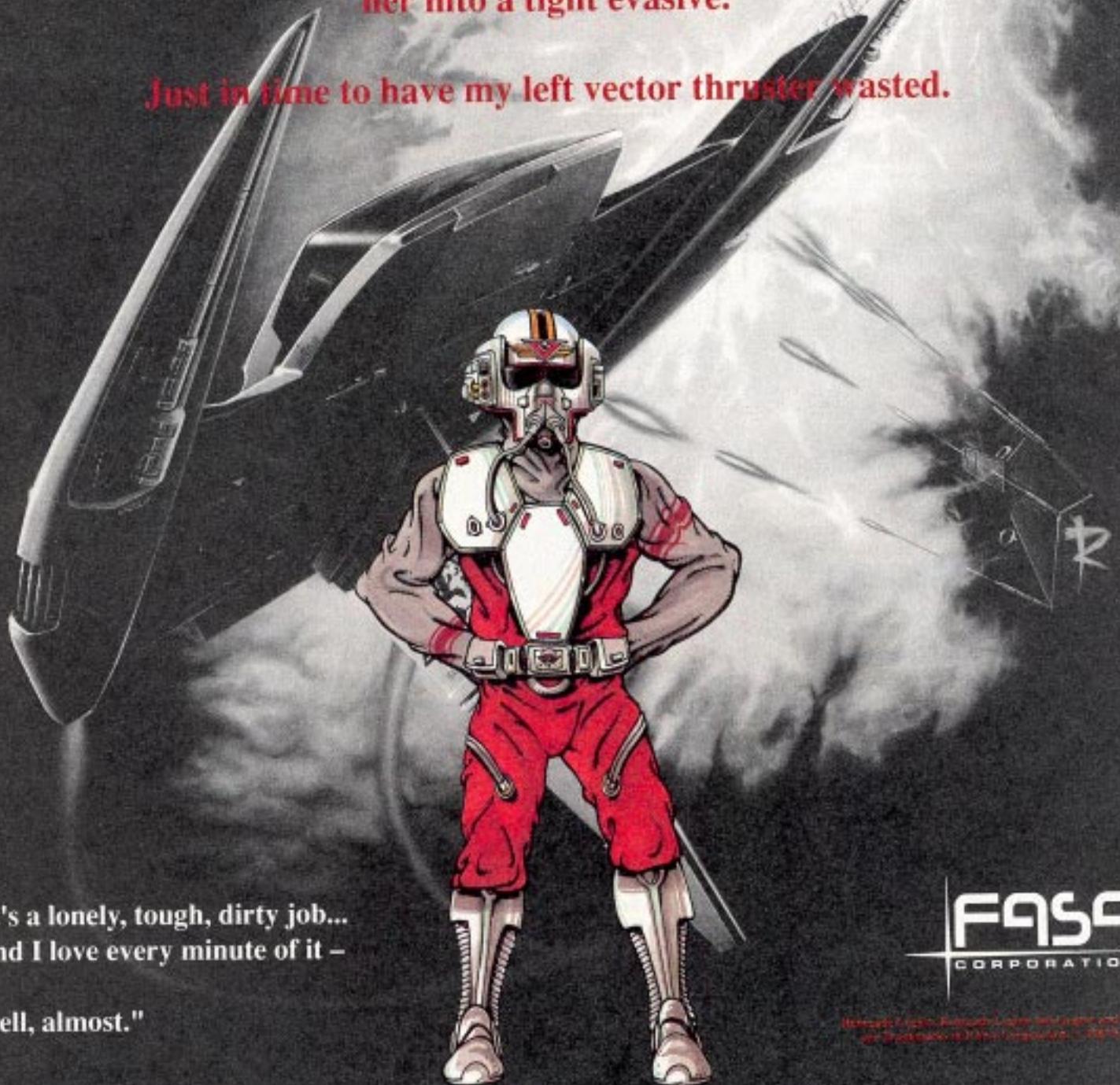
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depth of one-half mile per level.

Any deposit located should be quite substantial, an amount sufficient to support the needs of a dwarven community for months or even years. Alternately, the DM could use the "Duration of a Mining Site" rules on page 53 of the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*. The material components required are the cleric's holy symbol and a small amount of the ore to be found.

Create Machine (Conjuration/Summoning)

Level: 6 Components: V,S,M
Range: 2" CT: 6 turns
Duration: Special ST: None
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: This spell encompasses a wide variety of spell forms, all used for the creation and enchantment of various machines and constructs. *Create machine* is similar to the magic used to create golems and other magical automatons. With this spell, dwarven clerics may create a variety of machines or large devices useful to dwarves (such as mining machines, pumps, elevators, water wheels, load-carrying carts, and other industrial-type devices).

First, the machine must be made from the finest materials, equal in value to from 25,000 to 250,000 gp, depending on the size and power of the project. Next, a circle of dwarven clerics linked by a series of *combine* spells must cast *commune*, *prayer animate object*, and finally, *create machine*, upon the device. A period of prayer, fasting, and meditation must then be observed until the machine is enchanted, just as with any other magical items enchanted by clerics (see page 118 of the DMG).

The machine created is nonintelligent and can follow no more than 10 simple commands programmed into the machine when created. (Such machines are typically controlled by manual controls rather than by verbal commands.) The power and range of abilities of any machine must be strictly regulated by the DM, just as with any other enchanted item allowed into the campaign. Machines comparable in power to an artifact cannot be created by PCs using this spell. Only legendary NPCs have the ability to create very powerful machines.

Any device created by this spell functions without fail or error for centuries, never requiring major repair other than common-sense maintenance unless the machine is severely damaged. The armor class and hit point total of the machine vary with the function and materials of the device; these figures usually have AC 4 to AC 1 and are able to sustain 30-50 hp damage.

No machine with obvious military function can be made with this spell. An enchanted waterwheel that runs forever or an underground mining machine may be created, but not a magical siege machine or armored attack vehicle. Such powerful

military machines come under the heading of artifacts, and so are well beyond this spell's power and effects.

Hand of Borogar (Alteration, Conjuration/Summoning)

Level: 6 Components: V,S,M
Range: 6" CT: 9 segments
Duration: 1 rnd./lvl. ST: None
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: This spell causes a great hand of earth and stone to emerge from any earthen surface — floor, wall, or ceiling. Once created, the *hand* performs the bidding of the caster for the duration of the spell. The base of the *hand* is rooted to the spot chosen by the caster, and cannot move from that spot. The *hand* does, however, have a reach of 10' in any direction. The hand possesses a strength of 20, equal to that of a stone giant. The *hand* could be used to uproot a small tree, lift a boulder, or help support a structure threatening to collapse.

The *hand* is too slow and awkward to grab any object that can move faster than 3" per round, but if the *hand* grasps a living creature, it inflicts 2-12 hp constrictive damage per round if the spell-caster so commands. The *hand* can also punch an opponent chosen by the caster. The *hand* can attack once per round, attacking with the same chance to hit in melee as the spell-caster. The *hand* always attacks last in a melee round because it is so slow. The *hand* does 2-16 hp damage when it punches. The *hand* can also attack by hurling stones just as does a stone giant, provided there are sufficient boulders within its reach. The *hand* can hurl stones a maximum range of 30", and a boulder inflicts 3-30 hp damage if it hits.

The *hand of Borogar* has AC 4 and can sustain 30 hp damage before being destroyed. Sharp weapons inflict only one-half damage to the *hand*. The *hand of Borogar* can also be destroyed by turning its earthen base into mud and mire, so it is vulnerable to any of the attacks that may destroy the *pillar of Borogar* (see the fourth-level spell listed herein). The material components for this spell are a pinch of earth and a finely crafted, miniature stone fist worth no less than 1,000 gp.

Renew Deposit (Alteration, Evocation)

Level: 7 Components: V,S,M
Range: 0 CT: 12 turns
Duration: Special ST: Special
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: This spell permits a dwarven high priest to renew the normally nonrenewable mineral resources upon which dwarven society depends. With this spell, a depleted mineral or metal ore deposit can slowly grow and renew itself. First, a mineral "seed" must be prepared. The type of seed must be the same as that of the deposit to be renewed (e.g., a gold seed is used to renew a gold vein, a diamond seed is used to restore a diamond mine). The value of the

seed ranges from 5,000 gp for a base metal (such as iron) up to 25,000 gp or more for a very rare substance (such as mithral or adamantine).

Next, a circle of dwarven clerics links together using a *combine* spell. The high priest casts *prayer* upon the seed, then casts the *renew deposit* spell with the circle linked again by *combine*. The seed is planted in the depleted vein at the midway point of the spell-casting. The clerics involved in the circle must then rest for 72 hours after the spell is completed, because the spell is so physically and spiritually draining.

Once the spell is cast, the depleted deposit slowly grows new ore until the vein is completely renewed. The vein renews itself at a rate that depends on the substance growing in the vein, as follows:

Base metal (iron or copper): 5-30 years.

Precious metal (silver or gold): 20-80 years.

Very rare metal (mithral): 70-100 years.

Semiprecious stones: 5-20 years.

Fancy stones: 10-60 years.

Gems stones: 20-80 years.

The substance grows until the deposit is fully renewed, up to the total volume of the original deposit. If the vein is again depleted, the spell may be cast again. If the vein is hastily mined before the deposit is fully renewed, the spell is broken and no additional growth occurs. Furthermore, no additional growth can ever occur, even if the spell is cast again, because the vein has been spiritually polluted by the greed and haste of the foolish miners. Only a special act of forgiveness by a dwarven deity can overcome the spiritual pollution of the area.

Rune of Impregnable Defense (Alteration, Evocation)

Level: 7 Components: V,S,M
Range: 6" CT: 12 turns
Duration: Special ST: Special
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: This spell is used to strengthen the fortifications of a dwarven stronghold by increasing the resistance of a castle wall, gate, portcullis, drawbridge, or other defensive structure against physical or magical attack. The spell is cast by a circle of dwarven clerics linked by a *combine* spell. Next, a large rune is inscribed on the surface of the structure to be protected in the last turn of the spell-casting. The rune is created to protect a surface of up to 2,500 square feet in area (such as a 50' by 50' section of castle wall). The rune is invisible after the spell is cast, but may be revealed by a *detect magic* spell.

The protection provided by the rune is not permanent; it expires after one month, and the rune fades away if the spell is not renewed. To renew the rune's power, a dwarven cleric of at least 7th-level experience must cast a *glyph of warding* spell upon the rune before it fades; the rune is thus renewed and remains in effect for

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another month. The dwarves must constantly renew the runes protecting a stronghold every month on a regular schedule, or else the runes fade away and become useless.

This powerful rune protects a surface from the attacks of battering rams, siege machines, stones hurled by catapults or giants, ballistae missiles, or other such physical attacks that inflict structural damage. All physical attacks inflict no damage to the surface. A section of castle wall or stone tower protected by this rune cannot be undermined and collapsed by sappers, because the rune maintains the strength and integrity of the structure and its underlying foundation.

This rune also provides protection from many magical attacks. Against an attack that inflicts structural damage, such as a *lightning bolt*, *disintegrate* spell, or a *horn of blasting*, a saving throw vs. spells may be made to reduce the damage by one-half. The saving throw made by the structure is that used by a 19th-level or greater cleric. Thus, if an earthquake spell strikes a structure protected by this rune, the earthquake's damage is reduced by 50% if a saving throw of 7 or better is rolled. If the save vs. spells is made against a *passwall* spell cast upon a protected surface, the *passwall* does not take effect.

This rune has one additional protective function. If a *prayer* spell is cast upon the rune by a dwarven cleric, any structural damage suffered by the protected structure repairs itself at the rate of two points of damage per round. The repair continues for as long as the *prayer* spell is in effect.

It is possible for the rune to be destroyed or dispelled, of course. If the surface upon which the rune is inscribed is utterly destroyed, the rune is also destroyed, and no repair may take place if a *prayer* spell is cast upon the rune. A section of castle wall reduced to rubble or a drawbridge smashed apart also loses its protective rune. A *dispel magic* spell cast by a high-level spell-caster might possibly dispel the rune. Again, the rune is treated as if cast by a 19th-level or greater cleric.

**Table 1
Prohibited Dwarven Clerical Spells**

| Spell level | Prohibited spells |
|-------------|--|
| 2nd level | <i>Dust devil, snake charm</i> |
| 3rd level | <i>Animate dead, feign death</i> |
| 4th level | <i>Giant insect, speak with plants, sticks to snakes</i> |
| 5th level | <i>Air walk, animate dead monsters, insect plague, rainbow</i> |
| 6th level | <i>Aerial servant</i> |
| 7th level | <i>Wind walk</i> |

**Table 2
Additional Dwarven Clerical Spells**

| Spell level | Additional spells |
|-------------|---|
| 3rd level | <i>Stone shape (MU5)</i> |
| 4th level | <i>Dig (MU4), magnetism (WJ3)</i> |
| 5th level | <i>Melt metal (WJ4), stoneskin (MU4), strength (MU2), transmute rock to mud (MU5)</i> |
| 6th level | <i>Metal skin (WJ5), move earth (MU6), rust to metal (WJ6), stone to flesh (MU6), wall of stone (MU5), warp stone (WJ6)</i> |
| 7th level | <i>Elemental servant (WJ7), wall of iron (MU5)</i> |

The material components for this spell are a golden writing stylus with a diamond point (worth at least 5,000 gp), which is used to inscribe the rune, and the holy symbols of all the clerics involved in the *combine* circle.

Concluding notes

The suggestions in this article may help the DM who wishes to create unique clerics in his campaign who are different from the clerics of other deities in their abilities and interests. While the above spells are primarily intended for dwarven clerics, the DM could adapt these spells for use by other spell-casters. For instance, a variation of the *rune of impregnate defense* might be used as an eighth-level magic-user spell, with which mages help defend a castle or walled city from invaders. Some of the spells related to underground exploration, the earth, or mining might be bestowed to the gnomish clerics of Segojan

Earthcaller or Flandel Steelskin. One or two of the spells dealing with metals or the smithy might be granted by a human deity such as Hephaestus (Greek mythos) or Goibhnie (Celtic).

The spells bestowed to dwarven clerics may vary with the specific deity worshiped by a priest. Clerics of the earth god Dumathoin will certainly have greater need for spells that affect earth and stone than the clerics of the marriage goddess Berronar. The war god Clanggedin Silverbeard will emphasize spells useful in battle (such as *strength*, *stoneskin*, or *metal skin*). Clerics of Vergadain will especially love spells used to divine the location of wealth. Berronar would probably stress the use of protective runes to defend the dwarven home, while one of Abbathor's evil traps is a special *glyph of greed*, usable by clerics of 9th level or higher, that inspires in the victim an unquenchable lust for wealth. DMs and players who have an interest in rune-magic should look up Larry DiTollo's excellent article "The Glyphs of Cerilon," in DRAGON issue #50.

Clerics in the AD&D game needn't all be cut from the same cloth. Of all the character classes in the game, clerics should be the most varied in their weaponry, armor, spells, skills, and aims. Clerics should be quite specialized in their abilities to reflect the natural differences among the class as they emulate the interests, goals, and powers of their chosen deity. A pacifistic cleric of Kuan Yin should be vastly different from a hell-bent-for-leather warrior-priest of Thor. As a whole, the clerics of dwarven gods should be different from the clerics of other races for the same reason. By granting them their own special spells and runes, dwarven clerics are made a distinct part of the game.

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VISA, ACCESS, AMEX

(continued from page 3)

Role-playing games covering combat and survival immediately following an atomic exchange or a major land war also fall into the close-to-home zone for many.

I have my moments in the close-to-home zone now and then, most often when I look at games showing the European situation during World War III. I was stationed in West Germany for three years and now find that games on WWIII make me a little nervous. I was a mental-health counselor in a medical company that would have been placed near the front lines of combat, where mental health would have been a moot issue. I was tagged to deal with casualties who could not be evacuated if the unit was about to be overrun. It's hard not to look at games on this topic without wondering about might-have-beens.

Still, such worries didn't keep me from playing such games entirely. A game is a game, and though I am opposed to nuclear war, I have enjoyed playing things like Blade/Flying Buffalo Inc.'s NUCLEAR WAR card game when the mood struck me. Some people say that playing wargames desensitizes you to war, in which case I suppose playing Parker Brothers' MONOPOLY® game should desensitize you to money, or playing lots of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games should desensitize you to the sight of a real orc.

The best way I found to deal with the close-to-home zone was to realize that a game was, after all, a game. Modern-era games is that they allow you to experience a bit of history or a certain current event, while removing you from the negative consequences of the event (you won't really get captured if you lose a battle). You get a chance to see the "big picture" in modern conflicts, and you can understand some of the problems that the people who actually fought in the war came up against. And we do have popular games on the American and British Civil Wars, which still merit strong opinions from residents of either country.

Modern-era games thus have considerable merit. Though reaction to them is understandable, playing them is of no harm. I still like loading up my missiles to nuke the opposition now and then. It does take the edge off my day.

Roger E. Moore

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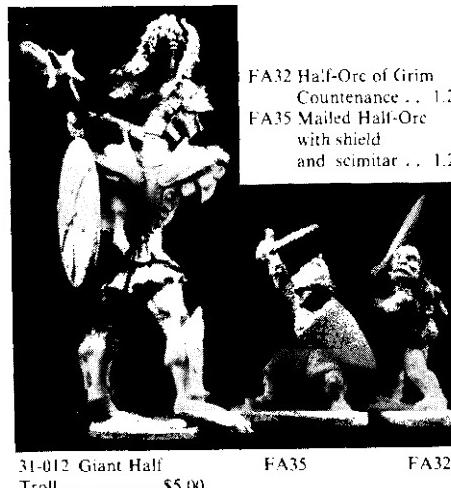
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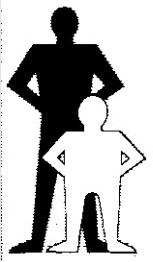
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Children of the Spider Goddess

The darkest elves' point of view

by Eric Oppen

The drow, or dark elves, are easily the most distinctive elves found in the AD&D® game. From their very appearance to their way of life, dark elves are as different from surface elves as is possible; in more ways than one, dark elves are like photographic negatives of surface elves. At the same time, the common ancestry of dark and surface elves shows up in the many similarities between the races. Indeed, the enmity between these races could well lie in the fact that each side sees a horrid caricature of itself in the other.

Pride and personality

The key to the dark elf's personality is pride. Any dark elf, no matter how lowly his station, feels that he is a natural aristocrat. No matter how powerful a nondrow is, or how awe-inspiring his achievements are, the most open praise a dark elf will usually give is: "You did about as well as could be expected, for a [fill in racial name]." When dealing with drow, other beings often note a hint of elaborate, subtle mockery in the dark elven manner. When among other races, even the humblest beggar-drow carries himself like a prince in exile.

For a dark elf, pride in clan comes just after pride in self. The achievements of a noble house are believed to reflect upon all its members; a merchant clan's successes, for example, are sources of pride for each member. At the same time, this pride often leads to bitter feuds between noble houses, since no drow is willing to believe that a house other than his own should be more prominent in a drow colony. These internecine feuds often grow very nasty, with assassins plying their trade briskly or with open battles breaking out in little-traveled corridors. One reason the drow give for the preemi-

nence of the priestesses of Lolth among them is that the priestesses ensure that these feuds are never taken to the point of endangering any one colony of drow. As a result, many dark-elven ballads celebrate heroes and heroines whose loyalty to their clans and kin saved the day.

The third sort of pride all dark elves feel is pride in their race and its accomplishments. To be sure, the drow do have reasons for being proud. In one of the most threatening environments on the Prime Material Plane, they not only survive but thrive within and dominate their surroundings. Dark-elven legend states that in the beginning, all elves were challenged to enter the underworld and test themselves against its elements. The ancestors of the drow accepted this challenge, and were made different from all other elves to commemorate their courage. Because of this, dark elves scorn their surface-dwelling kinfolk for choosing the easy, untroubled life. "More danger, more glory" is a common drow saying.

Dark societies

Some commentators have wondered how the chaotic-evil drow manage to hold themselves together and survive at all, much less how they have done as well as they have. The answer lies in clan loyalty, as noted earlier. Even the most chaotic, evil, and primitive drow differentiate between the "in group" with whom an individual cooperates and the "out groups" who are fair game. This is reflected among primitive tribes in our own world: Many of the names these tribes give themselves translate as "the people," indicating that outsiders are not quite regarded as human. The drow feel much the same, although more so about their merchant clan or noble house, purely as a matter of survival. Clan loyalty among dark elves is intense and deep, even though it does not preclude nonlethal infighting for positions,

of dominance within the group. The drow feel that leadership should go to those who show themselves worthy, and a leader worthy of the title is able to keep subordinates loyal to the clan.

Drow adventurers are usually social exiles, and have no clan to which they may cleave. This loss tends to make drow adventurers intensely loyal to their adventuring party, although their normal tendency for domination is exacerbated by dealing with nondrow. Such a drow defends the group with fervor and fury (simply as a matter of survival) in order to preserve the only surface-dwellers with whom he feels even partially comfortable — yet may constantly quarrel with and engage in petty rivalries with group members when with the group alone.

One tendency drow share with the other elves is a deep appreciation of beauty and quality in all things. For the drow, this appreciation is manifested in a drive to excel at whatever is done. A drow craftsman with centuries of perspective thinks nothing of taking a few decades off to become skilled in some new craft technique. This drive for excellence ensures that any items manufactured by drow are of the best quality and beauty. The love of beauty is somewhat spoiled by the sharp and egotistical pride they feel in viewing their own works.

The drow love of beauty is one main reason their race engages in the construction of free-standing buildings in the high, wide caverns they favor. Queried on this practice, a drow often responds: "What scope for skill can holes grubbed out of the rock afford?" This tendency for building runs contrary to that of most other underground races.

The drive to excel at all things, combined with personal pride, tempts most dark elves to leave menial work to slaves or servants, thus providing the free-time for studying spell-casting or practicing the

warrior's arts. Even drow thieves and assassins take great pride in their skills, often competing to see who can steal the most in a set time, or to see who can assassinate a particularly difficult target first.

Dark-elven society, unlike that of any known race of surface elves, is basically matriarchal. Whether or not this came from the widespread worship of the demoness Lolth is unknown. In any case, noble houses are usually led by their most dominant female member. The males accept this rule without cavil. Like other elves, the dark elves do not discriminate against a dark elf of proven ability simply on account of sex (noble houses led by males exist, though they are rare).

The priestesses of Lolth, along with their male assistants, form an elite group and provide such race-wide leadership as exists. When an intrafamily vendetta threatens the colony, or an outside threat has been detected, the priestesses of Lolth usually rally the other dark elves to their banner. No drow could willingly accept domination by any single noble house, but those who serve Lolth serve a cause that almost all evil (and even some neutral) dark elves revere.

The drow adventurer

Drow adventurers are even rarer than halfling adventurers. A drow needs very powerful motives to leave his or her clan. One common motive for such departure is alignment. Any good-aligned dark elf finds his entire society repugnant. The casual acceptance of betrayal and treachery as methods of advancing the clan's cause, the worship of Lolth and trafficking with other demons and devils, the casual cruelty with which slaves are treated — all of this tends to alienate a good dark elf. Attempts at reforming drow society might follow, only to be promptly quelled by the amused majority. When a good dark elf has had enough, he might well decide to defect to the side of the predominantly good, surface-dwelling races.

Evil drow might also find themselves trying their luck among the surface-dwellers. In this case, the predominant motive could well be that their clans have been virtually destroyed as a result of a vendetta or assassins' war. With no clan and many enemies, the surface might hold fewer terrors than the drow's subterranean home.

Still another motive that could apply to any drow adventurer is greed. Dark elves are well aware of their relative advantages over other races, and a dissatisfied dark elf might easily decide to put his skills to use against inferior opposition. This sort of dark elf usually plans a brief surface sojourn with intentions of returning much richer than when he set out.

As can be expected with such a unique race of beings, the dark elves approach each profession in their own distinctive manner. Often, their perspective on a given profession is unlike that of any other

known race.

Dark-elven cavaliers are immediately recognizable (even in full plate mail with a closed visor) by the holstered hand-crossbow they invariably carry. Since cavaliers must start out as good characters, these dark elves are converts from evil. Like many other converts, they are often more fervent about the cause than those whose lives have been spent in its service. Good and neutral drow cavaliers are among the most relentless foes evil has. Their race is often an advantage in itself, for many evil beings are more at home in darkness — an element in which the drow operates at peak efficiency. As the drow reach higher levels, their innate spells become more useful, particularly against enemies who are unaware of the fact that they're up against a dark elf.

Dark-elven clerics are almost all female. Unlike other elves, dark-elven females have unlimited advancement in the clerical class, which gives rise to some anomalous situations. A case is known in which a dark-elven female cleric of Corellon Larethian rose far past the highest level that the worship of Corellon Larethian normally allowed. Like regular cavaliers, good-aligned, dark-elven clerics are particularly remorseless in battling evil; their familiarity fuels their hatred of it.

Fighters hold a relatively low status among dark elves, even among the ranks of adventurers. Most dark-elven fighters are multi-classed, if any talent for another career exists. No dark elf likes to think that *all* he is good for is fighting. Nevertheless, a dark elf with fighting skills alone works just as hard to perfect these skills as he would in any other profession.

Drow rangers are a rare and special breed. Like dark-elven cavaliers, they are usually converts from evil, and are just as fervent against it as are dark-elven cavaliers. Not surprisingly, drow rangers prefer operating at night, making them invaluable members of any rangers' organization. Since many evil beings think that the night is *their* time, a few drow rangers can often be more effective than their numbers warrant. This is due, in part, to the overconfidence of their foes. Taking advantage of their race's evil reputation also helps. A drow ranger has a better chance of entering an orc encampment and being accepted as a nonthreatening stranger than any surface-dwelling demihuman does.

Magic-users among the drow tend to be male for the same reasons that female drow tend to be clerics. Often, a dark-elven male who chafes at female domination within his society takes up magic in an effort to excel at something few female drow are capable of. Good drow magic-users tend to be less dismayed over the concept of dealing with demons than they do over dealing with magic-users of other races, especially since drow magic-users are so familiar with various beings from the lower planes.

Thieves and thief-acrobats of dark-elven race steal primarily to prove their superiority over nondrow characters. Their predilection for operating in darkness, combined with their innate spell-ability and high dexterity, make drow thieves difficult to stop. In thieves' guilds, dark elves often specialize in the kinds of jobs that cause other thieves to despair. Drow thieves believe that success where other thieves fear to dare demonstrates dark-elven superiority.

Drow assassins seldom bother to go adventuring. In drow society, these characters perform a function that is both valuable and in high demand, and one in which they take great pride. In the eternal cold war between various noble houses and their associated merchant clans, dark-elven assassins often do the perilous work of removing leaders who pose a particular threat. At other times, they perform the task of removing particularly charismatic troublemakers who threaten dark-elven society with reform or the overthrow of Lolth's priestesses. Since the drow seldom dare to war openly among themselves, the skillful assassin receives much of the status that a fighter receives among other races. In fact, the drow attempt to hire the services of nondrow assassins of higher rank than they themselves can attain. These higher-level assassins are offered enticing rewards and challenging work. Several human Guildmaster Assassins have accepted these offers; one Grandmother of Assassins who disappeared mysteriously is said to have taken on the job of defending a hard-pressed noble house.

Racial considerations

Dark elves distrust most characters — dark elven or not — who are not members of their noble house or clan, but they do make some judgments by race. Generally, dark elves respect humans of higher level than they themselves can attain. Contrary to *Unearthed Arcana*, dark elves should have a neutral disposition with respect to halflings. Unlike the other races to which they bear antipathy, halflings are not competitors for dark-elven food and living space. Furthermore, halflings do not even vaguely resemble races whom the drow disdain; as a result, most dark elves are entirely unfamiliar with halflings.

Gnomes, despite their similarities to halflings, are another story. Deep gnomes and dark elves have feuded throughout history, fighting over alignment, food, and living space. The deep gnomes are also tempted by the wealth of the dark elves, who share an envious greed over the wealth of the gnomes. This tends to make dark elves prejudiced toward all gnomes, whether "deep" or not. The gnomes' love of pranks and japes makes matters even worse. Although dark elves have a good sense of humor, they find jokes directed at them extremely unamusing.

Hill and mountain dwarves, being easily the most subterranean of all the surface-

dwelling races, have a long history of conflict with the dark elves. The dwarves usually claim they were tunneling along when the dark elves ambushed them without warning. Likewise, the dark elves claim that the dwarves, having discovered the drow wealth, deliberately tunneled toward their treasure caches. The usual dwarven-elven differences in outlook merely make things more bitter. To the disdainful drow, dwarves are grotesque, self-enslaved, compulsive hoarders. The dwarves, for their part, can't understand how any race with the undeniable subterranean skills of the drow can be so flighty. Furthermore, the drow penchant for slavery and evil enrages dwarves.

The dark elves are of two minds about half-orcs. The few half-orc assassins of levels above those the drow themselves can attain are respected (though never to the same extent that humans of equal level are). Other half-orcs are lumped together with orcs, hobgoblins, and other humanoids in the dark-elven mind. Such humanoids are regarded as useful cats-paws and patsies, but are not deserving of much respect. Thus, half-orcs are often underestimated by the dark elves. The excellent craftsmanship of the gnomes and dwarves is respected by the drow, and the few halflings the drow encounter are respected for their superlative thieving abilities. But half-orcs have no crafts or arts, nor any real prospect of improving themselves. Consequently, half-orcs often receive exaggerated praise from the dark elves for anything they manage to do. ("Oh, look! You actually managed to kill that monster! Isn't that wonderful!")

Gray dwarves are probably the race with whom the drow feel most at ease. As underground demi-humans, both races have a lot in common. In many areas, both races have discovered that cooperation benefits both sides. Dark elves and gray dwarves have often fought as allies. Likewise, the two races often engage in a great deal of trade. The dangers of the underground environment force both sides to suppress the traditional dwarven-elven distrust that is typical of their surface-dwelling cousins.

Surface elves, as is well-known, are the people the drow hate most. Even good-aligned, surface-dwelling dark elves share some of this feeling, albeit to a lesser degree. The drow feel contemptuous of the easy life led by the surface elves; in like fashion, the surface elves are revolted by the demon-worship common among the drow. Civil wars and intrafamily feuds are usually the most bitter, and the feud between dark and surface elves is no exception. Indeed, many dark elves who defect to the surface because of alignment do not associate with surface elves if possible. Often, these defectors find it difficult to quell their childhood training of fear and hatred for their surface-dwelling cousins.

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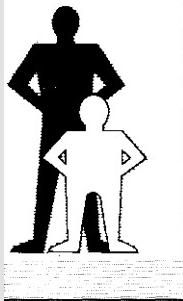
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Give Demi-humans an

More dice are nice when rolling ability scores

by John R. Prager

Characters of the major demi-human races begin their AD&D® game lives with distinct advantages. Some advantages, such as infravision, resistance to magic and poison, and bonuses to attack rolls, inhibit the attrition rate of these 1st-level characters. Thus, a demi-human character often has a greater chance of surviving to advanced levels than an identical character of the human race. The lifespans of demi-humans are nearly always longer than those of humans as well. To offset this, the demi-human character is limited to relatively few classes and cannot advance to the highest reaches in most of these. This guarantees that virtually all long-term AD&D games are dominated by humans, because of that race's capacity for unlimited advancement. At best, there may be a few demi-human henchmen or hirelings.

Unearthed Arcana attempts to redress this imbalance by extending the maximum levels of demi-human races, as well as by opening up more classes in which they may participate. The idea seems to be that there will be greater impetus to develop demi-human PCs, now that higher experience levels are accessible to them. Sadly, *Unearthed Arcana* offsets this by adding the new method for generating PC ability scores (page 74). This method, which is restricted to human characters, gives much higher totals than those methods available to demi-humans (*Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 11). It can be argued that the human character needs better scores in order to survive at lower experience levels, and that such scores serve to balance out the initial advantages of the other racial types. Certainly, it is true that an adventurer must be an unusual individual, with unusually high scores in his fundamental attributes. Nevertheless, any contest involving either a human or a demi-human of equal class and level will ultimately favor the character with the better ability scores — and the current rules guarantee the human will be the

better endowed.

Furthermore, the rules in *Unearthed Arcana* allow a player to specify the class of his human character beforehand, thus being assured of meeting the minimum standards for that class. Indeed, he usually receives exceptionally high ratings in his prime requisite area due to the distribution of dice rolls. A player desiring a demi-human character, on the other hand, must make the best of whatever is rolled, and consequently may not qualify for the class desired. Otherwise, he may just meet the minimum criteria in the prime requisites. The net result is that demi-human PCs are even more effectively discouraged under the new rules.

This article seeks to redress this situation by providing a new method of generating demi-human ability scores. As with all such changes, these rules can only be incorporated in an existing campaign with the DM's approval. The proposed method allows for higher ability scores overall and some preselection of class. Coupled with access to higher experience levels, this should encourage more demi-human PCs in a campaign.

Die-rolling procedure

Once the player decides to generate a demi-human character, he should consult the Character Generation Table, which specifies the number of six-sided dice to be rolled for each of the ability scores. In general, the number of dice rolled reflect the natural tendencies of the racial type. For example, dwarven races roll several dice for constitution, but few for charisma. The three highest dice for any roll are added together; the sum is the rating for that ability.

In addition, the player is allowed to add four more dice to those to be rolled. These dice may be incorporated in the roll for one ability score, or distributed among several. In this manner, the player may try to preselect his class, and obtain a good chance of high prime requisite abilities. For example, a player, desiring his hill dwarf character to be a strong fighter, may choose to roll as many as 11 dice for

strength, instead of the usual seven dice. Another player, hoping to create a high-elven magic-user/thief, may opt to roll nine dice for both intelligence and dexterity. Yet a third may reject the stereotypical half-orc, and use his extra dice to boost comeliness and charisma.

In all cases, the player must tell the DM where his extra dice rolls will be spent before he begins rolling for any ability. No more than four extra dice may be rolled. The player may not decrease the number of dice rolled for any category below the minimum listed on the table; in particular, he may not reduce the dice for one ability in order to increase the dice for another ability.

Once the ability ratings are generated, they are modified according to the standard rules for adjusting demi-human scores in order to find the character's final attributes. At this point, the player may officially choose his class. The new character must meet the normal score requirements for the chosen class; if the prime requisite scores are too low, another class must be selected instead.

Racial notes

The "generic" dwarf character is typically a hill dwarf or mountain dwarf. As detailed in the *Players Handbook*, such characters receive a +1 bonus to initial constitution, and a -1 penalty to charisma. No such adjustments apply to the scores of their evil subterranean cousins, the gray dwarves.

Both high elves (the most common subspecies) and gray elves use the same numbers for generating ability scores; each race gains a +1 bonus to dexterity and a -1 penalty to constitution. Additionally, gray-elven characters receive a +1 modifier to their initial rolls for intelligence. Wood elves are stronger, but less intelligent, with a +1 on strength and a -1 to intelligence scores. Wild elves tend to be the strongest of all, with a +2 modifier to the initial strength roll. Note that a player choosing to create a drow character must specify the gender before he rolls the dice;

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dark-elven ability scores are not adjusted once generated.

Half-elves are the most humanlike of the demi-human races; this is reflected by the range of dice in their ability scores. Those few of dark-elven parentage gain a modicum of the drow's native attributes. The DM should require any player who wishes to generate a half-elf of drow stock to justify the existence of such a character. Few humans venture to the depths where drow make their homes, and drow, for their part, rarely visit the surface lands; consequently, such crossbreeds must be rare indeed. And why would such a character become a surface-dwelling adventurer? [*"Children of the Spider Goddess,"* in this issue.] The player proposing a half-drow character should provide a complete history for the DM's approval before any

dice are rolled.

All halfling characters receive a penalty of -1 to their initial strength score, and a bonus of +1 to dexterity. Those of pure stoutish ancestry roll two more dice for constitution and one more die for strength than is indicated above; those of pure tallfellow stock gain two dice for dexterity and one for intelligence. In either of these cases, the player is only allowed two additional dice, not the customary four, to be rolled at his discretion. When a halfling of mixed ancestry is created, all four bonus dice are used.

Gnomes of all sorts do not have modifications to their initial scores. Half-orcs gain +1 bonuses to both strength and constitution, but must accept a -2 penalty to their initial charisma score, as the *Players Handbook* requires.

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Don't Sell Them Short!

Halfling guardians: defenders of the small folk



by Peter Dosik

Halfling guardians are a rare subclass of fighters with special abilities and clerical spell-use. Guardians are typically commanders of halfling fighters in wartime and troubleshooters in times of peace. In areas where guardians appear, an average halfling community has one guardian for every 25 halflings. Villages situated in dangerous areas may have more, perhaps two or three for every 25 halflings, while those in safer locales have less (one for every 50 halflings or none at all). In any case, no more than 10 will guard any single community.

The patron god of all guardians is Arveen the Defender (see *Unearthed Arcana*, pages 115-116, or the Best of DRAGON® Magazine Anthology, Volume III, pages 20-21). Guardians are taught to have utmost respect for their patron and his clerics, as both play an important part in guardian training. Guardians are often sheriffs or deputies whose function is to keep domestic affairs in order. Even if guardians do not hold these positions, the sheriff or clerics of the halflings can always call upon guardians for assistance.

Abilities and characteristics

Only exceptional halflings can become halfling guardians. The class requires no prime requisite, and guardians do not receive an experience-point bonus for high ability scores. To determine the needed scores, use Table 1. Saving throws and combat attacks are made on the fighter's tables. Hit dice are eight-sided, with one gained for every level up to the 9th (the maximum level that can be gained). Any armor, shield, or weapons may be used, as well as oil, but poison cannot be used at all. Initial weapon selection is restricted, as noted under "Proficiencies" below, and

their size prohibits the use of many weapons as well (see "Two Hands Are Better Than One," in *DRAGON* issue #127).

Race: Halfling guardians must be halflings, of course, but may be of the tallfellow, stout, or hairfeet subrace.

Alignment: Guardians may only be lawful good, lawful neutral, or neutral good. Wandering guardians may have changed to chaotic good or neutral alignments, but this is extremely rare. About 70% of all guardians are lawful good.

Starting money: Guardians receive 30-180 gp.

Number of attacks per round: Guardians receive attacks of 1/1 up to 6th level, and 3/2 at 7th-9th level.

Followers: Guardians do not gain any followers.

Proficiencies: Guardians begin their careers with proficiencies in four weapons; they acquire one additional weapon proficiency at 4th, 7th, and 9th levels. Their nonproficiency penalty is -2. Halfling guardians may use any weapon their size permits, but must be proficient with the short sword, the short bow, and the sling at 1st level. The fourth weapon is usually the dagger, although the axe, spear, knife, hammer, mace, dart, scimitar or even the trident are possible. Guardians of 1st-level experience have two non-weapon proficiencies (see *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, pages 23-29).

Special abilities

Guardians have the bonuses normal halflings have, as per the *Players Handbook*, page 17. They are +3 to hit with bow and sling, and save at +4 or +5 against rods, staves, wands, and poison (according to constitution).

At 1st level, guardians are +1 to hit and damage when wielding short swords; at 6th level, they are +2.

Guardians have the ability to track as rangers do (as per *Unearthed Arcana*), but at -20%. Thus, a 1st-level guardian has a basic - 10% chance to track quarry. When indoors, there is an additional - 10%.

A guardian can heal himself by calling on religious power. He must be in a state of complete rest similar to a trance. The power heals 1 hp per level of the guardian for every five rounds spent in concentration, up to a maximum of 15 rounds. This *healself* ability can only be used once per day. For example: A 7th-level guardian spends one turn healing himself. He regains 14 hp (7×2). He can't heal himself again that day, although he could have spent five more rounds healing himself if he hadn't stopped.

At 3rd level, guardians acquire a special warning sense. If a guardian is in a familiar place and evil is nearby, there is a chance that he will sense it by making a saving throw vs. poison (without bonuses). If the roll fails, the guardian senses nothing unless the evil being remains nearby for another turn. The range of this power

is 120 yards, and it only functions when the guardian concentrates upon using it.

At 5th level and above, guardians are able to cast spells. Spell-use ability up to third level is available for clerical and some druidic spells (including five new spells); see Tables 2 and 3 for details.

Guardians who are with a specific community and church need pay only a quarter of the normal fees required to gain a level of experience. This fee represents a donation to the clerics. Wandering guardians, however, must pay normal costs to advance in level.

Rules and restrictions

Halfling guardians have a number of restrictions and rules they must follow:

Guardians defending a specific community may not accumulate wealth beyond what they need to cover moderate living expenses. (This restriction is usually relaxed slightly for the rare and important high-level guardians.) Any excess money acquired from monsters or intruders is immediately donated to the community government and the churches. (In a typical halfling village, there may be only one or two churches that have shrines for all the halfling gods.)

If a guardian becomes evil, he is immediately stripped of all special powers and becomes a normal fighter. If the alignment change was involuntary, the former guardian might be allowed to return to the class after performing a quest and penance,

Like cavaliers and paladins, halfling guardians must follow a code of conduct, but it is simpler and less restrictive than those of other classes. If obeying a rule of conduct would cause the death of the guardian, he is allowed to break it, although he may be expected to perform a simple penance later. The first rule is the exception:

1. Guardians may never flee from an enemy unless all those under his protection have safely escaped.

2. Like their patron Arvoreen, guardians never attack first. However, if obvious invaders (such as orc raiders) are about to enter the village, the invaders are considered to have attacked first. This point is subject to interpretation, of course, but Arvoreen may be flexible in his final judgment.

3. Guardians will defend the honor of their god and race.

4. Guardians will respect and obey the clerics and druids of all the halfling gods.

Guardians in the campaign

The guardians' job of defending halfling communities does not leave time to practice another trade. Consequently, halfling guardians receive money by collecting taxes from the community. In simpler communities, guardians request what they need from other halflings, who are obliged to fulfill the request. In return, guardians

patrol the community and surrounding areas, driving away or killing monsters and intruders. They also command the defense of the village when invaders attack and keep the peace within the village.

Any zero-level halfling who feels qualified to be a guardian can apply for training. Training for this class often lasts for several years. In the final test, clerics perform a special ritual to determine if the candidate meets Arvoreen's standards and is finally worthy of becoming a guardian. There are usually several candidates at the start of a training period; most, however, aren't determined or competent enough to complete the course. Sometimes, though, two, three, or even more halflings complete training and are approved. If there are more guardians than the community needs and can comfortably support, some must leave. If none of the older guardians retire, one of the younger ones must volunteer to return to normal halfling life or become a wanderer. Because only the most adventuresome halflings become guardians anyway, there are usually some who are happy to take the second option. Regardless of what they do (such as becoming an adventurer or finding a steady job), wandering guardians must still follow the guardian's code and defend those who need to be defended.

If the DM agrees, wandering halfling guardians may be used as PCs. Note that guardians are not an official class and might not be well-fitted to a campaign.

New spells

The following are spells gained only by halfling guardians. The spell-use information for guardians is found in Tables 2 and 3.

Humansize (Alteration)

Level: 1 Components: V,S
Range: Touch CT: 2 segments
AE: One halfling ST: None

Duration: 5 rounds/level above the 4th

Explanation/Description: This spell makes a halfling grow to the size of a human and appear exactly human in all ways. Everything the halfling is wearing and carrying also grows proportionately. A short sword, for example, grows to the size of a long sword. The spell does not cause the halfling to be disoriented or clumsy; the recipient is adjusted to and in control of the larger body as if it were normal-sized. The larger halfling also gains two additional points of strength. If the halfling's strength goes above 18, it goes to the first percentile rank on the strength tables on page 9 of the *Players Handbook* (e.g., a halfling with a strength of 17 increases to 18, which becomes 18/01 for the duration of the spell). The true race of *humansized* halflings can not be discovered even by magical means. If the guardian casts the spell on himself, he can return to normal at will. But if the spell was cast on another, that halfling remains humansized until the spell expires.

Warning Shout (Alteration)

Level: 1 Components: V,S

Range: 0 CT: 1 segment

Duration: Instant. ST: None

AE: ½-mile radius

Explanation/Description: A halfling guardian who casts a *warning shout* can project a single word loud enough to be heard outdoors approximately a half-mile away. The sound is magically amplified so that it is the same volume close to the spell-caster as it is at the edge of the spell's radius. Only one word may be projected using this spell (such as "Intruders!" or "Help!"). The caster must decide what the word is when praying for the spell, not when casting it.

Sparkling Sword (Evocation)

Level: 2 Components: V,M

Range: 0 CT: 1 segment

Duration: See below ST: None

AE: Spell-caster's sword

Explanation/Description: When this spell is cast, the guardian's sword takes on a bright, sparkling silver glow (silver is Arvoreen's holy color). There are two applications of the spell. The first effect lasts for only one round and only one attack; that attack is at +2 to hit and +3 to damage. It allows the spell-caster to strike creatures hit only by +2 weapons. If the attack misses, the spell is wasted.

The second form of the spell is not as powerful as the first but lasts longer. This effect lasts for five rounds plus one round per level above 6th. All attacks made while the spell is in effect are at +1 to hit and +1 to damage, and affect creatures hit only by +1 weapons. When the spell is finished, the sword must save vs. crushing blow as hard metal or be ruined. If there is 10 gp or more worth of silver in the sword or hilt, the sword receives a +2 bonus on the saving throw. The material components are a short sword and a pinch of sulfur, which is tossed upon the sword's blade.

Blazing Sword (Evocation)

Level: 3 Components: V,M

Range: 0 CT: 1 segment

Duration: See below ST: None

AE: Spell-caster's sword

Explanation/Description: *Blazing sword* is a stronger version of *sparkling sword*. The first version of the spell lasts one round and makes the caster's next attack +3 to hit and +5 to damage. The second use makes the sword +1 to hit and +2 to damage for four rounds plus one per level over 7th. The effect upon the sword following the spell's casting is the same as that of a sparkling blade spell. The components used are also the same as for the sparkling blade.

Giantsize (Alteration)

Level: 3 Components: V,S

Range: Touch CT: 3 segments

AE: One halfling ST: None

Duration: 9 rounds +3 rounds/level above 7th

Explanation/Description: *Giantsize* is similar to the first-level spell *humansize*, except that the recipient and his possessions grow to the size of a hill giant. In this case, a short sword grows to the size of a bastard sword (which a giant could wield for full effect with one hand). The halfling's strength automatically becomes 19 for the duration of the spell. A giant-sized halfling wielding a *blazing* bastard sword is a very formidable opponent while the spells last. There is no effect on armor class while the spell-caster is *giantized* as the halfling lacks a tough hide. Ω

Table 1**Guardian Score Determination**

| Ability | Score Minimum generation | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| | score | (Method VI) |
| Strength | 14 | 6d6 |
| Intelligence | 11 | 4d6 |
| Wisdom | 11 | 4d6 |
| Dexterity | 14 | 6d6 |
| Constitution | 14 | 6d6 |
| Charisma | 14 | 6d6 |

Table 2**Experience Levels for Halfling Guardians**

| Experience points | Level | 8-sided dice for hit points | Spells usable — by level — | | |
|----------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 0-2,000 | 1 | 1 | — | — | — |
| 2,001-4,000 | 2 | 2 | — | — | — |
| 4,001-9,000 | 3 | 3 | — | — | — |
| 9,001-18,000 | 4 | 4 | — | — | — |
| 18,001-40,000 | 5 | 5 | 1 | — | — |
| 40,001-70,000 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 1 | — |
| 70,001-140,000 | 7 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 140,001-250,000 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 250,001+ | 9 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 2 |

Table 3**Spells for Halfling Guardians**

| First level | Second level | Third level |
|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Animal friendship (D1) | Aid (D2) | Blazing sword (new) |
| 2 Bless (Cl) | Barkskin (D1) | Detect lie (C4) |
| 3 Command (Cl) | Cure light wounds (Cl) | Dispel magic (C3) |
| 4 Detect evil (Cl) | Find traps (C2) | Feign death (C4) |
| 5 Detect magic (Cl) | Hold person (C2) | Giantsize (new) |
| 6 Entangle (D1) | Messenger (C2) | Locate object (C3) |
| 7 Humansize (new) | Slow poison (C2) | Neutralize poison (C4) |
| 8 Remove fear (Cl) | Sparkling sword (new) | Prayer (C3) |
| 9 Speak with animals (D1) | Trip (D2) | Pyrotechnics (D3) |
| 10 Warning shout (new) | Warp wood (D2) | Snare (D3) |

C1-4 indicates the level of a clerical spell.

D1-4 indicates the level of a druidic spell.

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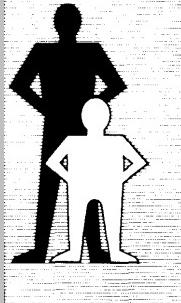
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Entering the Drider's

What happens after a drow fails Lolth's test

by C.E. Misso

"Your failure has proven you too weak to represent the race of the drow. I therefore sentence you to the form of the drider!" With those final words from the demoness Lolth, a dark elf is painfully transformed into the hideous shape of the drider: a misshapen creature, half-drow, half-spider — the possible fate of all Lolth-worshiping drow who fail her test, as described in the *Monster Manual II*, page 60.

The first drider was created many centuries past by Lolth, queen of the Abyssal plane known as the Demonweb Pits. In the first few years of the drow's existence, Duagloth, a drow in the service of Lolth, was bribed into stealing Lolth's platinum egg (as detailed in AD&D® module GDQ 1-7 *Queen of the Spiders*). When Lolth learned of this treachery, she turned Duagloth into a hideous cross between a drow and a spider. Now, to insure a finer racial stock of drow, Lolth tests all drow of promising ability who worship her; failures result in driders. Duagloth is rumored to still survive in some remote area of the world; and may be more powerful (and dangerous) than other driders.

Upon reaching 6th level or thereabouts, a promising evil drow is summoned by Lolth to the drow homeland in the underworld, where he or she is brought to the Abyss. Lolth there puts the drow through a specially devised test. Clues as to the nature of this test may be found in GDQ 1-7 *Queen of the Spiders*, in the section on the Demonweb. Those drow who fail the test become driders and are dropped off on the Prime Material plane in random spots. Note that a drider's form is permanent; nothing short of a wish spell or divine intervention will restore it to its drow form.

Once a drow becomes a drider, it seeks the seclusion of caverns and tunnels; avoiding contact with nondriders as much as possible out of shame, hatred, and fear. Due to ill feelings about its failure and bloated appearance, the drider becomes totally self-centered. As a result, its

alignment changes to chaotic evil if it was not so already. Once a drider has claimed a certain area as its territory, it receives the service of 2-12 huge spiders (*Monster Manual*, page 90) as a sort of parting gift from Lolth. New spiders may be attracted to replace those lost in combat later.

Many of the drow's former abilities are greatly altered by the change to drider form. A brief summary of these changes appears in Table 1. Those abilities which are not lost include: the creature's former knowledge and languages known; abilities to detect secret and concealed doors (*Players Handbook*, page 16); 12" infravision; clerical and magic-user spell-casting abilities (6th or 7th level in the former case, and 6th, 7th, or 8th level in the latter); 90% *sleep* and *charm* resistance; innate drow spells as per sex and level (FIEND FOLIO® Tome, page 34; and *Monster Manual II*, page 60); sharp senses allowing surprise only on a roll of 1 on 1d8; abilities to detect slopes, new construction, sliding walls, certain traps, and depth underground as per dwarves (*Players Handbook*, page 16); +2 bonus to save vs. spells (as per drow); sensitivity to and penalties from exposure to bright light (FIEND FOLIO Tome, page 34); and knowledge of the "silent tongue" (though the drider cannot master this unspoken language in its new form, it understands it perfectly well, and can still make a few of the gestures). A drider, like a drow, can use a weapon in either hand, and can even attack with weapons in both hands, making two attacks per round so long as each of the weapons is of long sword size or smaller. Drow (and thus driders as well) do not have the sword and bow "to hit" bonuses of other elves.

Unlike drow, however, driders gain poisonous saliva and needle-sharp teeth, making their bite dangerous (1-4 hp damage, plus save vs. poison or victim is paralyzed for 1-2 turns). Any psionic abilities once possessed by a drow are lost if the drow fails a *system shock survival* roll during the transformation into drider form. All driders are sterile.

Other changes may occur as well. A 50%

chance exists that the drider is also endowed with the ability to spin a web. The resultant web covers a 10'-square area and acts as a *net of entanglement*. Up to 10 such webs can be spun per day, and they can only be used by the drider who spun them.

The drider also acquires a natural thirst for blood, as if it were a real spider. A drider must consume blood at least once every four days or receive 1-6 hp damage per day. The damage is cumulative and only heals once a live creature's blood has been digested. Because of this need for blood, the drider is constantly creating new and efficient weaponry to use on its victims.

If attacked and harmed, a drider becomes enraged, having only a will to kill. Consequently, the drider never checks morale in combat and gains a +4 save vs. fear. The drider enjoys using its weapons on victims and attackers, but it also has a taste for employing traps, and prefers to single out its victims for ambush, biting to paralyze and then drink the victim's blood.

With its new body structure, the drider gains a dexterity of 18 and a +2 bonus to strength (for a maximum of 18). The effective intelligence, wisdom, and constitution scores of the drider's drow form are retained intact. As a result of its appearance, the drider PC receives a -8 penalty to its charisma and comeliness (minimum score of 1). All elves hate and fear driders.

All driders, regardless of their drow backgrounds, gain certain skills similar to those used by assassins, thieves, and thief-acrobats. These skills (and those skills not so gained) are given below and in Table 2 (see *Unearthed Arcana*, pages 23-25, for most details). These skills cannot be improved save by changes in the drider's dexterity or strength scores. All base chances for success are those of a 6th-level thief-acrobat or assassin, unless the drow-turned-drider previously had a higher skill level in these classes.

Tightrope walking: The drider is perfect with this ability because of its spiderlike structure.

Pole vaulting: This ability is not possible

Web

Table 1
Ability Changes from Drow to Drider

| Former drow ability | Present drider ability |
|---|--|
| Armor and dexterity determine armor class | Natural AC 7 from thick skin (AC 3 from 18 dexterity) |
| Move 12" or 15" (females) | Move 12" (either sex) |
| Hit dice as per class* | HD6+6 |
| Drow-made armor and weapons | Weapons as can be found; no armor (magical items possible) |
| 50% or better magic resistance | 15% magic resistance |

* Dark elves entering Lolth's test are usually multiclassed, with levels of ability between 6th and 8th level in the highest-rated class; other classes may have lower scores. Acceptable classes include fighter, cleric, assassin, thief, thief-acrobat, and magic-user; see DRAGON issue #103 for acceptable class combinations for drow.

because of the size and shape of the drider. Also, because of its jumping ability, this skill is actually of little use to the drider.

High jumping: Because of the drider's leg strength and its additional number of legs, the drider gains an 18' bonus on this skill.

Assassination: This is one of the drider's main abilities due to its dependence on living organisms for sustenance. Due to a repeated use of this skill, the drider gains a 15% bonus for this skill.

Pick pockets: Because of its awkward shape and height, the drider receives a penalty when attempting this maneuver. This skill (like the others here) is gained even if the drow was not a thief before being turned into a drider.

Open locks: This is similar to the thief ability.

Find/remove traps: This is similar to the thief ability.

Read languages: This is similar to the thief ability (driders are easily bored and reading passes the time between victims).

Broad jumping: Because of its increased leg strength, the drider gains a bonus when broad jumping.

Tumbling maneuvers: The increased

dexterity of the drider, along with its new shape, provide a greater maneuverability than that of a normal human or drow.

Move silently: The drider receives a penalty when executing this ability due to its increased weight and number of legs (a lone drider can still surprise opponents on a 1-3 on 1d6, in the manner of an elf).

Wide in shadows: The drider receives advantages when using this skill, as a result of the drider's adapted color and shape.

Hear noise: The drider gains bonuses in this ability as a result of its heightened senses.

Climb walls: Because of its spiderlike ability, the drider can perform this skill flawlessly.

Stalk: This ability is similar to the beast-master ability given in DRAGON® Magazine, issue #119. The drider is able to perform this function without error because of its familiarity with its natural habitat. The drider uses this ability to follow and capture its prey.

Track: This ability is similar to the beast-master ability given in DRAGON Magazine, issue #119.

Table 2
New Drow Abilities

| Ability | Bonus/penalty |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Tightrope walking | 100% |
| Broad jump | |
| Standing | +18' |
| Running | +28' |
| Pole vaulting | Not possible |
| Tumbling maneuvers | |
| Attack | +5% |
| Evasion | +7% |
| Falling | +5% for every 10' |
| High jumping | +18' |
| Move silently | -15% |
| Assassination | +15% |
| Hide in shadows | +15% |
| Pick pockets | -15% |
| Hear noise | +5% |
| Climb walls | 100% |
| Open locks | Normal |
| Stalk | 100% |
| Find/remove traps | Normal |
| Track | 100% |
| Read languages | Normal |

As noted in the text, these bonuses and penalties are based upon either the 6th level of ability as a thief, thief-acrobat, or assassin, or upon the skill level possessed in these classes as a drow, if such levels were over the 6th level.





Naval warfare and tower adventures

The Role of Computers

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We've completed two weeks' worth of adventuring that has presented a new frontier for our gaming environment, filling it with animated sights and stereophonic sounds. This frontier is from:

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Feature review

Tower of Myraglen

*** 1/2

Tower of Myraglen is programmed for the Apple IIGS. The stereo capability is available to IIGS gamers only if your computer has an MDIideas Supersonic Card installed inside. MDIideas is a company related to PBI; thus, its stereoboard inserts into the motherboard of the IIGS easily. With such a board installed, the previously

restricted boundaries of miniature monophonic speakers are dramatically expanded. We managed to borrow such a card for this review and hooked up that boards output jacks to two Bose external speakers, and — WOW! — what a difference stereo sound can make in a computer game! Wait until you hear the orchestral score that accompanies the opening title screen!

In this adventure game, you are cast in the role of a Knight of Justice who answers the King of Myraglen's plea for help. The Medallion of Soul Stealing, which can drain a victim's soul from his body, rests within the Tower of Myraglen. The forces of good and evil are each trying to locate the artifact. The King needs this medallion to defeat evil, but only a Knight of true honor and goodness can retrieve the medallion, and that Knight must face untold horrors during his hunt for it. The Tower possesses the nastiest creatures this side of the AD&D® game module T1-4 *The Temple of Elemental Evil*, as well as precarious portal spells, perilous tricks, brain-teasing

puzzles, and hazardous tests to prove your mettle as a Knight of Justice.

Although we have not yet finished the entire game, it has kept us spellbound for hours, despite a few drawbacks. The most annoying problem is the method by which messages are relayed to the player. You'll encounter many messages throughout the game; some are extremely important, but others could have been just as easily handled in properly written documentation. Messages are located by either looking at something or tripping a message algorithm in a certain area of the Tower.

A message brings into being a wizardly on-screen character who explains certain relevant facts of life to you; he departs when you move onto another "square." Unfortunately, many of these textual presentations seem to go on forever, slowing the game considerably; they could have been better presented within the game manual. When these displays are on-screen, it behooves the player to immediately write down what is contained in the presentation — regardless of how long this

takes. Otherwise, it is possible to forget what a particular message states. Once you leave that scene, you cannot return to that locale and expect the same message to be presented once again. To reread these messages, you'll have to reboot or reload a saved game; then the notations will appear once again at the same locales.

As is common in many adventure games, most messages are vital to an upcoming encounter or are designed to lead you through a myriad of horrible haunts to reach a specific sublevel goal. Clues are hidden in messages, and the player should decipher them if he plans to finish the quest successfully. Some of *Tower of Myraglen*'s messages are quite helpful, as the following example shows:

The tower's size may be a surprise
But you must realize that it harbors
many a prize.
The gorgon guards no key you seek
So search abroad and don't be meek.

Certainly, this is not Walt Whitman; it is, however, a timely note for players who

Screen 1: Two gunners prepare a little present for an oncoming man-o-war in Broderbund's *The Ancient Art of War at Sea*. See page 36.

may not have encountered the solitary gorgon. If the message is received first, the gorgon can be avoided (the treasure we had hoped the creature might be guarding doesn't exist in the first place). Let this be a warning to *Tower of Myraglen* participants — if you believe a deadly monster is simply a motile hazard placed to make you earn a treasure, rethink your strategy.

One last note regarding the game's messages: A few should be far briefer, as only a scant amount of text can be displayed on the on-screen message window (see screen #2). One particular message, found on the first level of the Tower, requires nearly 30 presses of the **RETURN** key to scroll through the information — which should have been published in the manual instead of in the game itself. The text deals with the origins of the soul-draining medallion and how the lad Mendalick knew he must protect the world from its powers. The introductory piece also explains how Mendalick constructed a tower of tremendous stone, known as Myraglen Rock. This substance was specifically created by him for the sole purpose of the medallion's protection, and it was impervious to all forms of attack. Instead of taking up valuable playing time, this message could have been printed with script type on parchment paper and inserted into the manual for easy reference. As the message itself is important to know, the player must continually scroll through the material until it is completed, hurriedly writing down the

contents. What could have been managed in a pleasing fashion turns out to be more of an annoyance.

Here end the complaints. *Tower of Myraglen* is certainly a fantasy-adventure treat. Your on-screen character can be controlled by using either the mouse or by selecting alphanumeric keys on the keyboard or the IIGS's keypad jets. We preferred the numeric keypad keys for character movement, as they allow you to pause the character anytime you wish. The drawback to using the mouse is that once you've indicated the direction in which you wish the character to walk (by moving the mouse in that direction: up for north, left for west, down for south, right for east), it continues to move in that direction until it runs into something solid or horrid. One blessing is that the character doesn't enter the game unequipped! He possesses the Ring of Unlimited Arrows, which affords your Knight an unlimited number of arrows to fire at approaching brutes. Through use of the **w**, **s**, **z**, and **a** keys, you can direct the firing of an arrow into the associated direction: **w** for north, **s** for east, **z** for south, and **a** for west. Players should learn how to combine the numeric keypad and the arrow-shooting keys immediately for game success.

One trick we used to conserve our character's hit points at the start of the game was to move the character to the edge of one screen and pause before moving into the next screen. For example, as the character approaches a door (see screen #3), have the Knight open the door, move into the doorway, and pause prior to moving through the doorway and into the next screen. This allows you to position a finger above the required direction key (in the case of screen #3, the **s** key) for full effect from the Ring of Unlimited Arrows to fire at anything that moves in the next screen. We saved our skins many a time through such strategic actions. Believe us: The 1,000 hit points your character starts with are soon used up through a variety of hostile encounters within the Tower.

There are numerous goodies located throughout the Tower that your Knight should attempt to recover for his own defensive and offensive purposes; these include the battle axe, chain mail, halberd, leather armor, long sword, magic weapons, plate mail, and short sword. Those that do all in their power to dent your armor and wreak havoc upon your body include the likes of the axebeak, cat, giant centipede, demon, dragon, fire beetle, flat-headed humanoid (which looks like a berserk Gumby), flying manta ray, fuzzy humanoid, gargoyle, ghost, guiser (a water elemental), Hades Hound, indescribable beast (yech!), giant lizard, mud man, mind warper, repair zombie (immortal, unfortunately), skeleton, slime, giant snake, unseen force, and giant wasp. Not a single one of these beings is in any way kind, generous, or forgiving. You should do unto them before they do unto you.

Once the quest is underway, you can use the Open-Apple key in combination with alphanumeric keys to access Game Screen menus. For example, using the **D** key allows you to diagnose yourself, which reveals your character's statistics. The **E** key lets you see your inventory, while the **G** key enables you to charitably give gold to someone (or something). In some cases, such a benevolent act can deter a rather nasty attack from ever taking place. The **L** key lets you look in a specific direction, with an on-screen explanation given of what you are gazing at, while the **o** key allows you to open items, such as a door or a chest. In the latter case, follow up with the **T** key, and you can take whatever was in the opened chest.

Advice time again: Don't be greedy! There's a tremendous amount of loot and other treasures laying in wait within the tower, especially in the numerous chests you're going to find. When the on-screen messages hint at greed being an undoing, consider such words most fortuitous. These hints don't mean you can't retrieve anything you find — just that you should be selective about your acquisitions.

You can also hit the **v** key for viewing monsters, which explains what breed of creature you are facing and offers an approximation of the brute's current number of hit points. You can also press **Y** to yell or talk (especially in response to a riddle) or select either mouse or keyboard operation of your on-screen Knight through the use of the **c** key. You can set the game speed with the **R** key, and quit with the **Q** key. Using the last key takes you directly to the IIGS's DeskTop, where you can save your game in progress, reload an old game, or reset the Tower and start over with a new character. (You'll find yourself involved in the last activity quite frequently!) You can also view the Hall of Honor, where the top 10 players are listed with their completed levels and scores.

The graphics in *Tower of Myraglen* are excellent. Throughout the game, various digitized sounds accompany the on-screen action. For example, when you finally reach the Tower's second level, listen for the "thud-dud" of what sounds like a behemoth pounding on a locked door. The thumping grows louder and louder as you approach the door, and you question your sanity in even thinking about opening the closed portal.

Other game hints note that your gateway to that treacherous second level ticks by with time, and involves some activity in real-time through the IIGS's Control Panel! (Witching hours are not only for witches.) You should also note that it is not mandatory to engage in combat with everything you happen to hail. Hit points are an extremely valuable commodity, and most fellow Tower travelers are of the inclination to radically decrease your life force. It is possible to regenerate hit points by finding a strength potion, but these are



This room appears to have been abandoned, as no creatures dwell here.

Screen 2: Your character has just tripped a message trigger in the Tower of Myraglen, by PBI Software. See pages 32-33.



Bronze serpents form knockers on the door. A faint voice whispers, "No, do not enter..."

Screen 3: A free bit of friendly advice is yours as you approach a door in the Tower of Myraglen. See page 33.

few and far between. There are many hidden passages and false walls that lead not only to treasures but to secret keys as well. Finally, remember the magic words of Myraglen — "Servo Devy Unum" — which could hold you in good stead throughout the game.

This is not one of the most difficult adventure games we've ever played, nor is it one whose plot is impossible to decipher. It won't take you forever and a day to complete your quest! The digitized stereo sound and superb IIGS graphics make *Tower of Myraglen* a great deal of fun.

Before we get to the news and Mini-Reviews, here's something for our readers. One of the finest adventure-game reviewers and writers we follow is Shay Adams. You may have seen his name as one of the fine contributing editors for *Family and Home Office Computing Magazine*. Shay is also the editor for QUESTBUSTERS™: The Adventurer's Journal, a marvelous monthly newsletter devoted to role-playing and adventure games for all computer systems. In the QUESTBUSTERS September 1987 issue, *Wizardry IV* is reviewed, as are *Pirates* and *The Land of the Lounge Lizards*. Coverage is also afforded to *Dan Dare* and *Golden Path*. Shay also runs an Adventure Hotline which offers coded newsletters' hints and tips, so if you're desperate enough to utilize the code to break through a particular gaming problem, the answer is right there for your use. The September issue is 12 pages in length.

Shay has indicated that if any of "The Role of Computers" readers sends a request to QUESTBUSTERS and encloses a business-sized, self-addressed, stamped envelope, a free copy of the newsletter will be sent. A 12-issue subscription is priced at \$16.00 (\$28.00 for overseas and \$22.00 for Canadian subscribers). Inquiries for the sample issue should be mailed to:

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Southeastern PA 19939-9968

News and new products

Accolade, Inc.
20813 Stevens Creek Boulevard
Cupertino CA 95014
(408) 446-5757

Mini-Review *Pinball Wizard*

Accolade continues to release some interesting games, not the least of which is their brand new *Pinball Wizard* arcade and pinball construction set for the Atari ST and IBM micros and compatibles. You have full-featured graphics, great sound and lights, and even "tilt" capability! We tested the Atari ST version and found the play both stimulating and exciting. There are four simulations with varying obstacles on the ST version. Flipper and backboard controls are manipulated by the ST mouse. But beware: If you move your mouse too much, the tilt sensors let you know right away that you've goofed. You can customize the game by changing parameters such as point scores, table slope, bumper elasticity, and the number of game balls. With the parts menu, you can assemble your own pinball machine, and can paint or decorate your creation any way you like with the game's paint menu (\$34.95).

Also from Accolade comes a rather different but enjoyable offering called *Mini-Putt*. This miniature-golf game has a cartoonlike approach to miniature golf, using really crazy golf courses and holes to play. You control your player with the joystick. For the Commodore 64, this game is priced at \$29.95.

Lastly, Accolade has ported their aerial-

combat simulator, *Ace of Aces*, to the IBM PC and compatibles. We haven't looked at this package yet, but the company's past PC performance is a solid indicator of yet another hit (\$29.95 for the Commodore).

Activision, Inc.

2350 Bayshore Parkway
Mountain View CA 94043
(415) 960-0410

This company continues its impressive growth cycle. It has now signed an affiliated label agreement with Microllusions, the developers of *Discovery* and *Fairy Tale Adventure*, which are both Commodore Amiga programs. The latest game, *GeeBee Air Rally*, a truly spectacular treat on the Commodore 64, is a combination air-race simulation and arcade game. You become an airborne racer in 1932, flying one of 16 different air courses. With 3-D graphics and increasing levels of difficulty, this is a fast and exciting offering. Activision has also released *The Last Ninja*, a martial-arts game, and has finally released . . .

Mini-Review

GBA Championship Basketball ****

GBA Championship Basketball is for the Apple IIGS. This offering finds you in a head-to-head, two-on-two basketball game with hook and jump shots, slam dunks, three-pointers, and more. With the practice mode available, you can really get the feel for the game prior to competition. This game is also available in a 24-team, four-division Gamestar Basketball Association version. (Gamestar, by the way, is the developer of this game, which is distributed by Activision.) You can see how your team is doing at any time through the box scores in the Gamestar Gazette. We've played this game for several evenings straight; we have found the competitive environment and the keyboard or mouse handling of the on-screen players easy to learn.

At Either End of the French Arm

2300

2300 plays against a background of Earth 300 years after the cataclysm of the Third World War, set in a world where nations still clash and civilization has crawled back to its prewar levels and then beyond. The world is dominated by the Third French Empire. Earth's hundred nations have colonies among the stars. First contact happened long ago, and commerce with alien intelligences is now commonplace. But exploration still goes on. The conquest of the stars has just begun—be a part of it with 2300! \$20.00.

Nyotekundu Sourcebook

The first star out from Sol along the French Arm is a rather ordinary one that otherwise would not attract much attention in humanity's scheme of things. But its central location makes it a rest stop on a very important interstellar highway, and the Nyotekundu system is now home to two outposts and an OMS mining station, the *Andrew Carnegie*. The sourcebook gives diagrams, personalities, and adventuring ideas for the two outposts in the system, including an encounter with a strange artifact bearing the message of a long-dead being.

from an ancient civilization.

\$10.00

Mission Arcturus

A German light squadron commander at Eta Bootis is determined to retake and examine the Arcturus Research Station. Since the player characters have experience fighting Kafers, they are quickly recruited to accompany this expedition against the dreaded aliens. \$8.00

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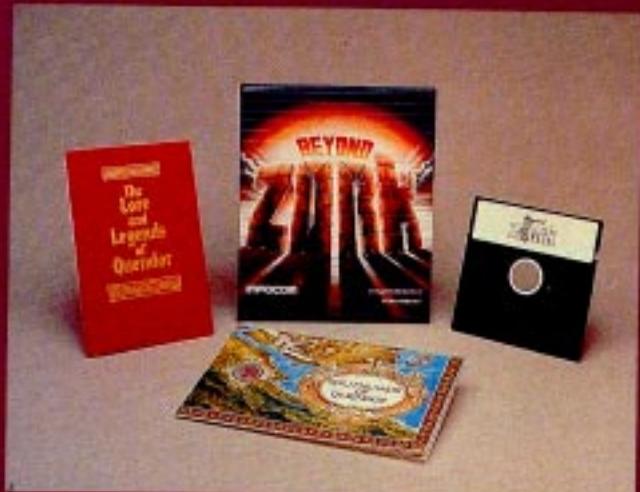
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Screen 4: A strategic view of your naval situation, from *The Ancient Art of War at Sea*. See below.



Screen 5: The latest in a long line of successes — *Beyond Zork*, by Infocom, Inc. See pages 38 and 40.

Applications Plus, Inc.

P.O. Box 24-293
St. Paul MN 55124
(612) 432-5560

Here's a company intent on improving your odds should you ever decide to learn how to play (and win) at blackjack or poker. Two new offerings teach the player not only how to succeed at either game, but also offer experience running the games on your Apple II computer. *Vegas Video Poker* (\$29.95) incorporates a good degree of skill, as the way in which you calculate odds affects potential payoffs as you play. *Beating The House At Blackjack* (\$34.95) includes methods for counting cards and features strategy tables which explain how you should play every hand possible. Again, the game's the thing; all other elements are included to give you all of the practice you'll ever need to become a successful blackjack player. Despite the less-than-inspiring graphics, both offerings are entertaining and (in a financial way) educational.

Baudville

5380 53nd Street SE
Grand Rapids MI 49508
(616) 957-3036

A company that heretofore has been involved in the productivity arena, Baudville has released its first adventure game. This offering, called *Dream Zone*, was created by two young programmers who used Baudville's computer paint and drawing program, *8/16 Paint* for the Apple IIGS. In this game, you become the prisoner of your own dreams and must escape the Dream Zone. With stereo sound and humorous dialogue, this is another game suitable for the entire family (\$49.95).

Broderbund Software

17 Paul Drive
San Rafael CA 94903-2101
(415) 492-3200

Mini-Review

The Ancient Art of War at Sea *****

There are any number of worthwhile games on the market today, ranging from arcade to adventure interests. One of our personal favorites happens to be the sequel to the Murry's hit, *The Ancient Art of War*. We believe *The Ancient Art of War at Sea* is even better, and is a "must-have" for wargamers. This naval-combat simulation takes place in the mid-19th century, when full-riggers plied the oceans in search of trade and pirates. The game manual includes an in-depth look at the historical period represented by the game and the sailing warships of that era. You command an entire fleet against one of five historic opponents: the Duke of Medina Sidonia (1588); Blackbeard (1718); John Paul Jones (1779); Horatio Nelson (1805); and one rather strange (and fictitious) Thor Foote. Each opponent has a different strategy that he employs against you.

The game is based on the writings of Sun Tzu, a Chinese tactician (c. 400 B.C.). This game has every avenue of naval combat imaginable, including boarding tactics and a game generator that allows you to build your own map. The tactics are well-presented, and should enable any novice Captain to advance to Admiral with patience and application of the lessons taught in both book and battle. We thoroughly enjoyed the ability to zoom in on a specific combat between ships, enabling us to maneuver the ship into appropriate defensive or offensive positions, as well as ramming, if necessary. Heartiest congratulations go to the authors and to Broder-

bund for releasing this fine naval-simulation game. This game is available for IBM micros and compatibles (see screens #1 and #4) at \$44.95.

Also coming from Broderbund is a most exciting flight simulation called *Wings of Fury*, wherein you become the pilot of a F6F Hellcat. With six Browning machine guns and the punch of 100-pounders, you're taking off from your flattop looking to engage enemy fighters, destroy enemy antiaircraft guns, and even take on a hostile destroyer or two. This offering is for the Apple II family at \$34.95.

Cosmi

415 North Figueroa Street
Wilmington CA 90744
(800) 843-0537 (outside CA)
(800) 654-8829 (inside CA)

Talk about production — Cosmi has debuted 14 new software programs to add to their bestselling *Huey II* and *Defcon 5* programs. Titles making their market entrance that might be of interest to DRAGON® Magazine readers include: *Chernobyl*, *Legend of Knucker Hole*, *Psycastria*, *Mediator*, *Fearless Fred*, *Time Tunnel*, and *Foto Fitter*, some of which are budget offerings. Call for prices and more information.

Epyx, Inc.

600 Galveston Drive
Redwood City CA 94063
(415) 366-0606

Mini-Review

California Games *****½

California Games is a new, action-packed offering that is totally awesome, like from Epyx, you know. Like, you can pick from eight radical events, from skating to tubu-



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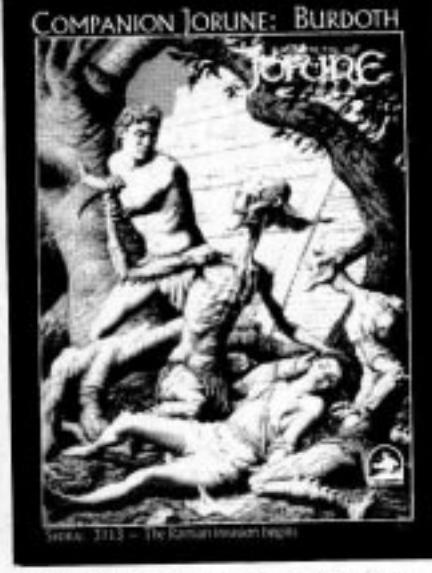
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Companion Jorune Ardoch \$7 (SR202)



Complete Boxed Edition \$25 (SR101)



Companion Jorune Burdooth \$9 (SR201)

Do the dangerous clash infest the East Trinnu Jungle Lands? Is it true that the Shanthas once fought the humans, thousands of years ago? What happens if the giggit awaken before they reach Tan Iricid? Can any Ramian be trusted? Why can't I take my crystals across the Dohen-AD? Why should I worry about isho? I can't even see it! Where do Ardoch's energy weapons come from? Where will I find the Hall of Drenn? Do I have to eat my durlig?

You may not know the answers to these questions now, but you are about to enter a world of intriguing, complex, and richly evolved creatures, cultures, and environments that will captivate and inspire you. You'll learn to avoid the chiveer Ramian, to read the isho of a muadra, preserve the thalliers of the Dhar Corondon, and seek out the now-elusive Shanthas. A non-mechanical energy technology is at your disposal; you'll learn the Spectral Stun and Flinger dyshas right away. With practice, you'll master the others, like Warp Generation, and Lightening Strike.

Your time on Jorune is the dawn of a new era; ancient caches of Earth-Tec have recently been uncovered. You'll be a part of a world of more than killables and collectibles. You are on your way to Jorune. This is no ordinary role-playing game.

"Right from the start you feel you've plunged head first into a real alien world..." —Robert Neville, White Dwarf, #82

SKYREALMS of JORUNE attempts to take us away from the cozy, mundane level... "Leave Your World Behind" the box cover suggests. And the game makes good on its lofty promise." —Matthew J. Costello, Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction®, Ten-Year Anniversary Issue

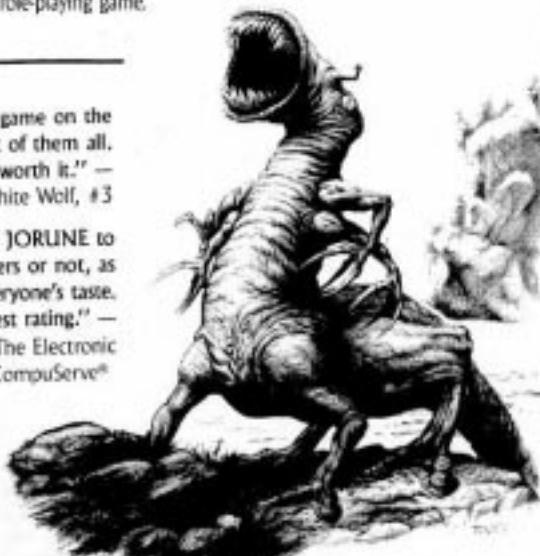
"I have played almost every major game on the market, and JORUNE is the classiest of them all. However you do it, get the game, it's worth it." —Stephen Wieck, White Wolf, #3

"I highly recommend SKYREALMS of JORUNE to any gamer, whether they're role-players or not, as there is something here to appeal to everyone's taste. SKYREALMS of JORUNE gets my highest rating."

Andrew Gore © 1987 published in The Electronic Gamer Magazine(TEG®) by CompuServe®

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JORUNE HOTLINE INFORMATION: 408-429-9938



lar skateboarding, from BMX racing to some totally radical moves in the footbag event. This game has some of the best graphics for the Commodore ever seen. The games are original, challenging, and will have you coming back for more.

After the opening screen (that includes a California license plate and the song "Louie, Louie"), you are allowed to select from the menu whatever sport in which you wish to participate. You can compete in all of the games or in just one event. You can also practice one event, look at the saved high scores, or view the opening screen over again. When you compete in an event, you can even select a corporate sponsor, selecting from: Ocean Pacific, Auzzie, Kawasaki, Casio, and others.

The events of *California Games* are exciting and graphically appealing. The skateboarding, or "Half Pipe" event, is one of the hardest to master, as this sport requires you to keep momentum or fall off the board, leaving you to start all over again. Tricks can be achieved through hours of practice, and we do mean hours! You can do handplants, aerial turns, and kick turns for a variety of points. The event ends after 1 minute and 15 seconds of blistering fun, or three falls, whichever comes first.

The second event is footbag, the game played by preppies worldwide. In this event, you control your athletic representative in keeping a hacky-sack off the ground and performing tricks for extra points. Your computer partner can turn and jump, and do such tricks as the headbanger, half and full axles, axel foley, doda, jester, and horseshoe to name a few. After 1 minute, 15 seconds have elapsed, you are awarded a variety of points for the number of different tricks that you successfully completed.

The scene is Santa Cruz; the event, surfing; the challenge, the wave. In this event, you control a surfer who does cutbacks, 360s, catches air (jumps), rides the crest of the wave, and goes into the tube. But not all is well on the waterfront; you have to maintain your board's speed,

make almost perfect landings for jumps, and stay above the bottom of the screen (otherwise, you wipe out and become the "geek of the week"). Controlling the surfer is the easy part — it's using the wave that's the hard part. After 1 minute and 30 seconds of riding, or four wipeouts, you are evaluated on the length of your ride and on how you used the wave on a 10-point rating system.

After you get the sand out of your hair, you have a date in Malibu for rollerskating. You must avoid cracks in the sidewalk, grass, sand, puddles of water, missing sidewalk pieces, runaway beach balls, and more. All these hazards must be avoided while performing jumps and finishing the track in the shortest amount of time possible. You control the skater's speed and the jumping that takes place (which is hard to master at first). While in the air, you can do 360s for additional points and also earn some respect for yourself. After completing the track, the scores are tallied to find who is King/Queen of skating.

Want something more on two wheels? How about BMX racing? Not only do you have to avoid obstacles and complete the course in the best time possible, but you can also do tricks for bonus points. Using the joystick, you must learn to gain speed, do wheelies, tabletops, 360s, and other tricks of the trade. This event is extremely difficult to compete in, and practice is essential to perform the tricks. After three minor and one major crash, the event ends.

The last event is frisbee throwing, wherein you throw a frisbee to a catcher and have that catcher move left or right, dive, jump, or run to catch the frisbee. At the beginning, you must use the joystick to send the frisbee on its voyage. A radar-type screen shows where the catcher is and the location of the frisbee. Using the joystick, you maneuver the catcher so he can catch the frisbee without letting the disc touch the ground. You get points for how well you catch the frisbee, and for which way you moved (left or right).

California Games is a must for every

sports enthusiast. The graphics are superb, and the music and sound are terrific. This game will have you returning to the computer for more and more contests, and developing different techniques for earning high points.

Electronic Arts

1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

The Bard's Tale is now released for the Atari ST, with advanced animation techniques and audio enhancements incorporated into this new version. The three-dimensional scrolling throughout the streets of Skara Brae and the halls of the dungeons is extremely realistic and provides an accurate adventuring environment for participants. Also for the ST, Electronic Arts released their fantastic arcade game, *Marble Madness*. This version also has an all new Secret Level to test your skills. For Atari 8-bit aficionados, the latest conversion to that machine for the *Alternate Reality: The Dungeon* fantasy role-playing Series has been made available by Datasoft. One of the best flight-simulator programs, *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer*, is now available for the Commodore 64/128 systems, and is in the definite "must" category.

Firebird Licensees, Inc.

71 Franklin Turnpike
Waldwick NJ 07463
(201) 444-5700

Note the new address for this company. A number of new games have made their appearance from Firebird. *Tracker*, originally released for the C64/128, is now available for Atari ST gamers. This version combines artificial intelligence with a massive playing area, along with action that is exhilarating and graphics that are outstanding (\$44.95). An adventure game trilogy, *Knight Orc*, has also made its appearance. This three-part game allows the orcs to wreak their revenge on the humans, who have been persecuting the orcs for centuries. This game is released for C64/128, Amiga, Atari ST, Apple II, Macintosh, and IBM micros! Also unveiled for the Atari ST is the company's latest version of *The Sentry*, in which you become a lone robot in a battle for supremacy of an alien landscape (\$44.95).

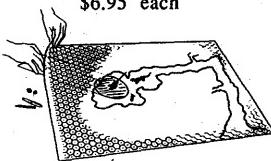
Infocom, Inc.

125 Cambridge Park Drive
Cambridge MA 02140
(617) 492-6000

Watch for a hit software offering coming from Infocom! Without a doubt, *Beyond Zork* is going to be a smash for the company. Here, the Zork series continues, but

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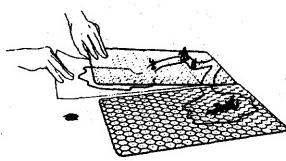
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GAMING SUPPLEMENT

Special Winter Edition

January 4th, 1988

Number 6

NEW PRODUCTS
FOR THE NEW YEAR

Whew. Things are heating up here in the middle of Winter. We've been preparing for the new year, and things look hot.

We thought you'd like a preview of what's to be released in the next few months.

We'll premiere a new type of DC™ Heroes RPG product in 1988. It's a combination sourcebook and adventure set, designed not only to give you an exciting scenario featuring your favorite hero, but to also give you the backgrounds and histories of the comic series' major characters (including villains).

The Wonder Woman™ and Doom Patrol™ books will be published in this format.

Our regular adventures with such heroes as Batman™, Black-hawk™, Superman™, Flash™, etc. will be back in our 1988 schedule as well as our great sourcebook line: with a special Belle Reve™ Sourcebook including more villains than you can shake a stick at, and the long awaited Teen Titans™ Sourcebook.

But that's not all. We have a few interesting surprises in store for you as well.

Starting this Winter, the heat is on at Mayfair.

If your favorite hero is being ignored or you need something for your campaign that's not in print, please suggest any possible new titles for our 1988 release program. Send a letter to:

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P.O. Box 48539
Niles, IL
60648

And for being so interested, we'll send you a free color Watchmen™ poster. (One entry per person, please.)

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ADVENTURES
INVADE
DC HEROES RPG

That's right. The device of presenting one storyline in two different characters' titles makes its debut in the two DC Heroes RPG adventures, *When A Stranger Calls* and *All That Glitters*.

When A Stranger Calls is a rollicking Justice League International™ adventure. The JLI™ is called into battle by the mysterious Phantom Stranger™. Whether the team meets this mystical evil in full force is dependent on whether Booster Gold™ decides to join them during his adventure, *All That Glitters*.

All That Glitters details Booster's public appearance tour for his new Booster Gold boardgame. In the course of his tour he receives the summons to aid the JLI. He must decide whether to keep his contract with the game company or act on his duty to the JLI.

But either course of action will bring Booster into deadly danger. If he goes with the JLI, he faces an evil force from another dimension trying to dominate the world. If he stays he faces an evil alien general trying to dominate the world.

Each adventure can be played separately from the other. But together they make an interesting and complex adventure for your gaming group.

(Note: *All That Glitters* also contains an actual copy of the *Booster Gold Boardgame*, to be played for fun and profit.)

DC HEROES RPG
TOURNAMENTS

Tournaments will be run at the following conventions:

The New Orleans Science Fiction & Fantasy Festival
January 22-24, 1988

Landmark Hotel, Metairie, LA
P.O. Box 791089
New Orleans, LA
70179-1089

Magnum Opus Con 3
March 25-27, 1988
Columbus Ironworks Convention Center
4315 Pio Nono Avenue
Macon, GA
31206



RICK FLAG, JR.™

| | | | | | |
|-------|---------|--------------|----|---------|---|
| DEX: | 8 | STR: | 4 | BODY: | 5 |
| INT: | 8 | WILL: | 5 | MIND: | 5 |
| INFL: | 6 | AURA: | 4 | SPIRIT: | 4 |
| INIT: | 22 (30) | HERO POINTS: | 60 | | |

SKILLS (*Linked):

- Detective: 6
- Charisma: 6
- Military Science: 8
- Martial Artist: 8
- Scholar: 5
- Spy: 8
- Thief: 3
- Vehicles: 8
- Weaponry: 8

LIMITATIONS:

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EQUIPMENT:

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Range: 1-3/4/5 Ammunition: 7
Two Reload packs.

CONNECTIONS:

Task Force X (High-Level)

MOTIVATION: Seeks Justice

WEALTH: Affluent

OCCUPATION:

Government Agent

RACE: Human

BACKGROUND:

Rick Flagg, Sr.™ was the head of a secret government agency after World War II: Task Force X™ (aka the Suicide Squad™). He died stopping The War Wheel™ from destroying a U.S. city.

Rick Flagg, Jr., his son, wanted to follow in his father's footsteps, and under the guidance of his godfather, J.E.B. Stuart™ successfully completed military training, and became a top-rated test pilot.

He was accepted into astronaut training school, where he met and fell in love with Karin Grace™.

During the course of their training, Task Force X was reactivated, and both of the young lovers joined. The group became Mission X™, and fought monsters, organized crime, spies, etc. In the course of one of their adventures two of the four teammates died. Karin left Rick, wrongly blaming him for the deaths of the others.

After the group was officially disbanded, Rick joined the group called the Forgotten Heroes™. After the Crisis on Infinite Earths™, that group broke up also.

The government formed the new Task Force X shortly afterward. Rick was assigned as its new leader, and Karin rejoined as well. In recent missions, Flagg has been replaced as head of the group by the Bronze Tiger™, and Karin Grace died fighting the Manhunters™.

Even though his conscience bothers him about the morality of the actions of the current Task Force X, Rick is staying a member.



with additional features and game enhancements not found in the original text-only bestsellers. *Beyond Zork* allows you to create your own character, and also creates a map for you as you hunt for the fabled Coconut of Quender, within which lies the essence of magic. Author Brian Moriarty will be interviewed in an upcoming issue. We have managed to view the Atari ST version of this fantasy adventure and believe this is one of those "biggies" that only comes around once in a great while (see screen #5).

IntelliCreations (Datasoft)

19808 Nordhoff Place
Chatsworth CA 91311
(818) 886-5922

The Atari ST version of *Alternate Reality — The City* has been released with enhanced graphics. Additionally, the company has reduced the pricing on some of their games: *Mercenary — Escape from Targ* now \$19.95 for both the Atari and Commodore 8-bit versions; *Theatre Europe* is now \$24.95 for all three formats; *Zorro* is now \$14.95 for the Atari and Commodore 8-bit floppy diskette, and *Gunslinger* is now \$19.95.

Mandscape, Inc.

3444 Dundee Road
Northbrook IL 60062
(312) 480-7667

Two great releases for Apple computers have debuted from Mandscape. The first is none other than the release of the fantastic *Balance of Power* by Chris Crawford (for the Apple II computer). The second is a new program entitled *Riddle Magic*, which allows users to create and print their own riddle books using a 5,000-word riddle dictionary. There's also a contest running in conjunction with this program, wherein winning riddlers will be awarded Mandscape software for their efforts.

PBI Software

1163 Triton Drive
Foster City CA 94404
(415) 349-8765

PBI, whose *Tower of Myraglen* is reviewed in this column, has also released four more games for the Apple IIGS computer. They include *Strategic Conquest II* (war and strategy tactics), *Cavern Cobra* and *Sea Strike* (arcade action-games for flying a Cobra attack chopper), and *Monte Carlo* (full time casino royale). Prices for these games are \$49.95 for *Strategic Conquest II* and *Cavern Cobra*, and \$39.95 for *Sea Strike* and *Monte Carlo*.

Sierra On-Line, Inc.

P.O. Box 485
Coarsegold CA 93614
(209) 683-4468

We've been writing about Sierra On-Line programs in numerous computer magazines for nearly a decade! As founders of one of the original software companies, Ken and Roberta Williams have been responsible for some of the best adventure games ever created for the computer. Such classics as *The Wizard and the Princess* will forever remain an important part of our computing heritage. Now, with superior packaging, the company has produced an Amiga version of *The Black Cauldron*, turning the Disney Studios animated feature into an adventure-game delight. With more than 70 3-D screens, there are eight different musical scores, six built-in arcade sequences, over 30 characters, and several possible solutions to this game. For those of an "older" persuasion, there's *The Land of the Lounge Lizards*, another 3-D animated adventure-game. Herein, the player becomes Larry the Nerd for one night — and what a night it is! The latter offering contains adult subject matter and should not be played without parental guidance.

Simulated Environment Systems

800 South Pacific Coast Highway
Suite 8-331
Redondo Beach CA 90277
(213) 379-6742

Save your money for a great fantasy role-playing software program called *Quarterstaff* from this new game company. The best description of the game that comes to mind is "impressive!" Released for the Macintosh, this adventure game is actually based on a world governed by Artificial Intelligence (AI). Environments change as you play, with the monsters' actions toward you and your adventuring party governed by how hungry, tired, or angry these beasties are at a specific time. This is a game where what you do affects what occurs from that point on. There are wizards, demons, and dragons, all providing you with an extremely realistic adventuring environment as you and two cohorts investigate the disappearance of the Tree Druid colony.

Spectrum HoloByte

A division of SPHERE
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda CA 94501
(415) 522-3584

The company responsible for marketing the smash hits *GATO* and *Orbiter* has managed to acquire the rights to *Intrigue!*, an adventure game for the Apple II computer family. If you like classic Bogart movies and really enjoy solving mysteries, this black-and-white interactive adventure game will become an addictive addition to the time you allot to computer entertainment. With over 2,000 possible solutions, Spectrum HoloByte has (quite thoughtfully) provided game hints for those times when you're so stymied that you would consider putting a contract out on the game's programmers. This game also allows players to run either male or female characters.

Strategic Simulations, Inc.

1046 North Rengstorff Avenue
Mountain View CA 94043-1716
(415) 964-1353

As one of the forefront gaming-software developers, SSI is in the process of releasing a number of exciting new program conversions. First of all, one we've all been waiting for is the Amiga conversion of *Phantasie III: The Wrath of Nikademus*. The wait was worth the enhanced graphics; this is one of SSI's better offerings. *Phantasie III* can be played as both a sequel to the original *Phantasie* fantasy role-playing games, or can be equally enjoyed as a stand-alone adventure offering. Atari ST users can thoroughly enjoy the fully animated fantasy adventure, *Rings of Zilfin*, which is now available for those

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machines. This latter release is, by far, our favorite version of the quest for bringing the legendary rings back together to rid the lands, once and for all, of the dark overlord.

Mini-Review

The Eternal Dagger

* ½

SSI is one of the premiere software-gaming developers in the business; it is responsible for many computer-game masterpieces and delightful fantasy role-playing adventure games. Unfortunately, we cannot say the same for one of its most recent releases, *The Eternal Dagger*. Designed as the sequel to the exciting *Wizard's Crown* game, we found a number of problems with *The Eternal Dagger*, not the least of which involved initiating successful play.

We were looking forward to this adventure, which continues the tale of the defeat of Tarmon and the recovery of the Emperor's Crown from the first game. A new Wizard's Fellowship has been formed to seek the cause of a series of mysterious and evil attacks; it learns that the nasty Arghan is once again preparing to invade. With the ability to port your *Wizard's Crown* adventurers to this sequel, we were expecting some exciting adventures. For all we know, those adventures still lay in wait somewhere in the bits and bytes on the disk — but we never found them.

First, you must Create your game disks using the same method as *Wizard's Crown*; this takes about five minutes. Once you are done, the only time your original program disk is required is when you boot the game.

However, if you are a *Wizard's Crown* adventurer, don't import your completed characters into *The Eternal Dagger*. The translation program does away with all but one wizard, and the remaining characters are really knocked down in abilities. This is too bad; after all, we spent several enjoyable hours adventuring in *Wizard's Crown*, but the hard-earned accumulation of experience and weaponry is all for naught when bringing those characters

into *The Eternal Dagger*.

You can create your adventuring party from scratch, but before doing so, you should determine if the premade party on the disk is to your liking. Eight adventurers are offered; each one is rather ordinary in capabilities, and certainly not the kind of folk we wanted to risk life and limb with. We sent each SSI-created character home, freeing up an adventurer slot for characters of our own creation. And here's the warning: One mistake or accidental slip of the finger could cause you to exit the creation module. If that occurs, you can't return to complete your adventuring party (and believe us: you need eight characters to succeed). As a result, you must start the party creation sequence from scratch again, which is really rather annoying.

There is absolutely no way that we could find that allows you to start from scratch to recreate your characters. You have to Create disks from the Main Menu once again, should the party you've created be inadequate in both number and power. You could Tell your deeds to the minstrel as you create characters (which saves the current condition of your party to disk) — but if you forget to save just once, you are without your full complement of adventurers should you accidentally exit the first castle.

This accidental exiting happened to us three times. We decided to try playing with the SSI-created characters. We got no further than a few miles with these adventurers, coming at last to a temple in the south. The party turned out to be entirely inadequate in holding its own against the hostiles that abound in nearly every hex. We tried playing with the SSI characters five times, and finally gave it up as a lost cause. A combination of undead farmers, giants, and swamp things totally eliminated the SSI group each time, regardless of whether the Quick or Tactical combat mode was selected. After spending a total of nine frustrating hours with *The Forgotten Dagger*, we decided to forget the dagger — permanently.

Curtis Manufacturing Company

305 Union Street
Peterborough NH 03458
(603) 924-3821

Finally, for Nintendo Entertainment System fans, a little game holder has been produced by Curtis Manufacturing Company. Called the *Curtis Game Caddy*, this device can store as many as 10 Nintendo cartridges conveniently and in a compact space. This is a nice little product to help keep organization around the house — and your room — for \$5.99.

The Clue Corner

Our thanks to Mel Huang of San Francisco who wrote to us and described some of the hints he had managed to uncover through intense play in several adventure games. They follow:

"My first hint is for SSI's *Gemstone Warrior* — every level has the same room layouts except the Labyrinth.

"In *The Bard's Tale II*, to earn experience points quickly, go to the Maze of the Dead in Tessalonica and fight the Dream Mages. Don't kill them until the very last moment. Allow the Dream Mages to continue summoning creatures, then cast a DIIL spell. If a summoned monster is disbelieved, you rack up as many points as you would have had you killed it. I recommend you wait until there are approximately 30 monsters, then cast the spell, disbelieve the creatures, and kill the mages. You should then be able to rack up the maximum amount of experience points possible for one combat.

"For *Might & Magic*, make all of your characters female, as only males get sexist treatment. Also, to find out Sheltem's name in the Soul Maze — OOPS. To quickly get to the Clerics of the South, go to Castle Blackridge South and use spells to go through some walls located near the throne room. You'll then locate the Pits of Peril, which takes you close to the Clerics."

Thanks for your help, Mel. As for the rest of you gamers, don't forget to send those hints and tips to us at the following address (no phone calls, please):

Hartley and Patricia Lesser
179 Pebble Place
San Ramon CA 94583

Also, if you have a favorite game, don't forget to vote for it in the first DRAGON Magazine software game awards. Just write the name of the program on a postcard, include your name and address, and include any comments you'd like to make regarding the game. We'll tally the results early this year for our "Best Of . . ." column. Until next month, game on!

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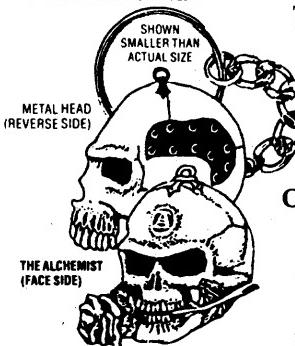
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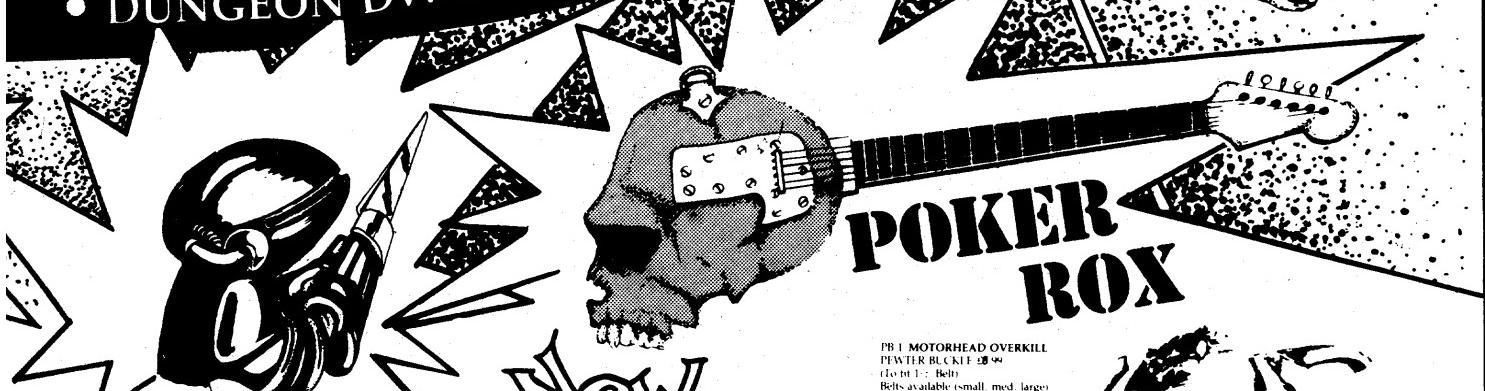
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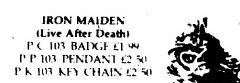
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A Sorcerer's Supplement

*New sorcery spells
for RUNEQUEST® game wizards*

©1988 by Michael DeWolfe

Chaosium's third-edition RUNEQUEST® game has an extensive list of sorcery spells, as given in the Magic Book, but the list can still be expanded. This article presents 12 new spells for RUNEQUEST game players. The spell statistics presented fit the format for The Avalon Hill Game Company's version of this game.

Bridge

Ranged, Passive, Temporal

This spell creates a bridge to cross the gap between two points. The bridge is capable of supporting two SIZ points per Intensity (remember to treat 6 ENC as 1 SIZ). The length of the bridge is equal to the Range of the spell (normally 10 meters). A bridge can be as long, last as long, and hold as much as the sorcerer can handle. For example, a bridge could hold an average unencumbered man and allow him to travel from Earth to the Moon, but would require 32 Free INT and Magic Points to be used and would last only 10 minutes. The atmospheric and temperature effects around the caster are duplicated across the bridge. Thus, a bridge could be established across a chasm, through a blistering fire, or through water. The bridge has to be simple in design and no steeper than 40° at any point. The bridge is a solidified, misty tunnel big enough to accommodate the SIZ for which it was cast.

Comprehend

Ranged, Active, Temporal

This spell allows the caster to comprehend written and spoken ideas more clearly. This can aid in research, reading scrolls, and understanding difficult foreign languages. Duration, instead of Intensity, is the main magical skill used with this spell, although the latter is still used. While the

spell is in effect, anyone talking to the caster speaks as though he is 10 percentile points greater in proficiency in his Speak Other Language ability. For anything read, the caster gains a 10 percentile increase in the Read portion of his Read/Write Languages skill. Spell research from scrolls takes 5% less time per Intensity during the effect of the spell. Thus, if a Duration 6, Intensity 2 Comprehend spell is used during a 10-hour reading of a scroll, the caster is able to take 11 hours of research from it, gaining one extra hour from the use of the spell. Note that this spell does not increase the caster's chance to write or speak languages.

Cool

Ranged, Passive, Temporal

This spell cools a defined area. The temperature within the caster's 10-meter radius may be decreased by 5°C per Intensity. This may be used to cool an especially hot and fatigued group of adventurers or to bring the temperature to a chilling low. The spell can also be used to freeze substances such as water.

Create Lycanthrope

Ritual (Enchanting)

This spell binds an intelligent creature to a double life as an animal and as itself at varying exclusive times. The enchantment is performed on the character as if the caster were enchanting a Spirit Spell Matrix worth three points plus the difference in INT between the two forms the target will later take. For example, if a character (INT 11) were to transform a cow into a lycanthrope, the change would mean an extra expenditure of seven Magic Points for a total of 10 Magic Points. Three POW points are used by the caster when this ritual is performed. After expending the POW and the Magic Points, the caster must match his POW versus the Magic Points of the target. The creature must

have an INT in order for this spell to be effective.

During the casting, the sorcerer must declare under what exact conditions the lycanthropy comes into effect. There is, however, one limitation: The target cannot consciously control its lycanthropy or its unintelligent alter ego. There must be a condition describing when the target becomes its alter form and when it changes back. For example, a lycanthrope could change from a human to a bear every full moon until the moon leaves its "full" state. This could also occur whenever the character ate meat, continuing until the meat has been fully digested. Likewise, the lycanthrope could change in the presence of a certain person or in a particular place. The change takes one second per point of differing SIZ. The new form starts with 2d6 less Fatigue Points than normal to simulate exhaustion. The lycanthropy may even come into effect under very special conditions and not show itself until it proves detrimental. The sorcerer has the choice of allowing the lycanthrope to remember what it does in both forms or having it forget what it does while in animal form.

Any damage incurred to the hit points or POW of the lycanthrope shows its effect in both forms. This enchantment can be broken by killing the afflicted creature, which means death for both forms of the creature. Otherwise, the creature must have one or more of its characteristics reduced to zero or less while in animal form, through magical means or through a condition such as disease. This results in the death of the animal and leaves the intelligent form without reduced characteristics; any damage incurred to the animal form, however, remains with the intelligent form until healed.

The character's animal statistics must be rolled up and kept for use when the adventurer changes form. When generating the characteristics, keep in mind what the abilities of the adventurer are; these should be reflected in the animal's characteristics (e.g., an above-average adventurer characteristic means the animal's same characteristic must be above average). All skills are at their base chances, though they can be increased through experience while the lycanthrope is in its alternate form. It is possible for a lycanthrope to have this spell cast upon it a second, third, or even more times to gain even more forms; this can get very confusing, though, and is not advised.

Expand

Ranged, Passive, Temporal

This spell allows containers to hold more than their normal capacity for the duration of the spell without increasing the exterior size of the container. The Expanded container masks its volume; its weight is reflected by the actual ENC contained. The space available in the object is increased by an additional 100% of the

original capacity per level of Intensity. For example, an Expand with Intensity 3 cast on a bag capable of holding 10 ENC makes the bag capable of holding 40 ENC for the duration of the spell. This spell takes effect on any sort of nonliving container. Intensity must be devoted to adding to the capacity of the container; the maximum basic capacity affected is 20 ENC, unless the Intensity is raised one to double the basic capacity affected. Thus, to affect a 20 ENC capacity container to make it hold 40 ENC, an Intensity 1 spell is needed. To affect a 40 ENC capacity container so that it holds 80 ENC, an Intensity 2 spell is needed. To make the latter container hold 120 ENC, an Intensity 3 spell is needed.

Fade

Ranged, Passive, Temporal

This spell causes an object to phase out of existence into a state of limbo for the duration of the spell. This limbo is a place of stasis where the object suffers no damage. If the object is living, it will not die, unless it is already on the verge of death. The spell affects 1 SIZ or 6 ENC per Intensity. For example, an average Human requires an Intensity of 13 for a successful Fade to be cast upon him — more if the character is encumbered. After the spell is cast, it takes effect on the target immediately and automatically. The caster cannot put himself into a Fade spell. Creatures affected by Fade leave the effect of the spell with one Fatigue Point and half the Magic Points they had when they entered the Fade state. Objects with spells cast upon them which are then placed under the effects of a Fade spell will leave the Fade state with their own spells continuing in duration as if no time at all had passed while under Fade's effects.

Detect Magic or similar spells are capable of finding the exact location of the objects affected. Dispel Magic can undo the Fade spell. When the spell is over, objects affected leave the field at the point where they entered it; living beings retain no knowledge of anything occurring in the spell interim. Anything in the way of the returning objects is shunted to one side. Spells cast on the area have no effect on the objects while they are under the effects of the Fade spell.

Implant

Ranged, Active, Instant

This spell allows a sorcerer to implant or take away memories within the minds of intelligent creatures. The caster can alter one minor memory per Intensity of the spell and one major memory per (target's INT/7) Intensity. A minor memory might include a tally of the money in one's possession, and a major memory could include information on one's own identity (referee's discretion advised). To be successful, a caster must first use his percentile skill successfully with the spell, then match his Magic Points to the target's INT. Once cast, the alteration occurs, and the

victim fails to notice unless a POW x 1 roll is made directly following the casting. If successful, this POW roll tells how long it takes for the character to recollect the alteration; the actual percentile dice roll is applied to the Duration/Cost table in the Magic Book (page 42) as the Free INT value. For example, if the dice roll resulted in an 11, the character notices the alteration 20,480 minutes (two weeks and five hours) later. The caster must know in advance exactly what memory is going to be altered before performing the spell. Mind Probe (see below) can be used to find what information there is and whether or not information of particular interest is there.

Magic Clothes

Touch, Passive, Temporal

This spell allows the caster to don an illusion which gives the appearance that he is wearing clothes. Depending on the Intensity, more complex or more lavish clothes can be cast. A comparative list follows:

| Intensity | Apparent value (in pennies) | Quality |
|------------------|--|-----------------|
| 1 | 1 | Cheap rags |
| 2 | 20 | Cheap wear |
| 3 | 45 | Common wear |
| 4 | 100 | Superior wear |
| 5 | 400 | Noble wear |
| +1 | 300 | Average jewelry |
| +2 | 5,000 | Fine jewelry |

The spell lasts until the caster is either asleep, Befuddled, Fanaticized, rendered unconscious, or stricken with Madness, Fear, Dispel Magic, Dismiss Magic, or Neutralize Magic. When in use, Magic Clothes occupies an extra point of Free INT regardless of its Intensity. Others may touch the clothing, which have the look, feel, smell, etc., of real fabric. Magic Clothes can be worn by themselves or over a full suit of clothing or armor. The spell provides no protection against attacks or the elements. The main use of this spell is as a parlor trick or cantrip.

Mind Probe

Ranged, Active, Temporal

This spell allows a sorcerer to probe the minds of creatures for information, memories, or facts. The spell can be cast on fixed or normal INT creatures, but the target must have an INT. Those creatures with normal INT resist the attempt by matching their Magic Points against the POW of the caster. Note that this spell cannot be used to gain skills or experience. Those searching the minds of characters cannot be affected by any mental maladies afflicting the target character (such as Befuddle, Fear, and so forth). The user must first specify what he is looking for before casting the spell. If he is looking for more than one piece of information, he must name all subjects he is searching for

in detail. The caster can find one memory per level of spell Intensity.

Transmute

Ranged, Passive, Temporal

This spell, when cast on a substance, turns it into the same shape and amount of another substance. The two types of substances must be chosen in advance of the spell's acquisition. Each Intensity affects 1 ENC of material. If one ENC of the material takes up more than 20 cubic centimeters of space, count every 20 cubic centimeters of material as being worth one ENC. The transmutation of a substance is complete during the spell's duration, and the transmuted object gains all the proper physical qualities of the product substance. For example, if a wooden board had Transmute Wood to Gold cast on it, it would temporarily become gold; it would melt if heated and be pliable to a hammer blow. When the spell's effects fade, the object returns to its previous state, but not the previous shape. If, in the above example, the board of transmuted gold was hammered into five rings and a puddle of the liquid, it would eventually become five wooden rings and a puddle-shaped piece of solid wood. Any substance can be transmuted to and from another substance; consequently, even air could qualify as the base substance.

Warm

Ranged, Passive, Temporal

This spell can heat an area to a reasonably desired temperature. The temperature within the caster's 10-meter radius is increased by 5°C per Intensity. This spell may be used to heat a cold group of adventurers or to raise the temperature of an area to an uncomfortable height. Warm may be used to melt ice, metal, or other substances without the use of a flame. The spell can be countered with an opposite spell, such as Cool.

Youth

Touch, Ritual (Enchanting), Instant

This spell restores the youth of a character without actually making him immortal. This spell costs one point of the caster's POW and CON when attempted. If successful, it turns all current characteristics back to their original figures. Agility and Perception skills cannot be greater than (DEX x 5) - SIZ, as with any Parry skills. Knowledge skills that can be increased through experience and Communication skills cannot exceed INT x 5%. Manipulation skills cannot exceed ((INT + DEX) x 2) + STR. Sorcery skills cannot be greater than (POW + INT) x 3% and Ritual Magic skills cannot exceed (POW + INT) x 2%. This spell reduces the recipient's age by 10 years or to age 25 (whichever is less of a difference) for the purpose of determining an Aging and Inaction check. This spell is rare and should only be available to an experienced sorcerer, such as an Adept or Magus.

SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., write to:

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This column goes back to the basics — the D&D® Basic and Expert Sets, that is — with advice for novice Dungeon Masters and players.

How should experience be divided among PCs after an adventure?

It is best to divide any experience award equally among all the characters who started an adventure — even if a few of them were killed and cannot collect any experience. This has two advantages: It provides an incentive for keeping all characters alive, since their "cut" of the experience is otherwise lost; and it discourages the practice of killing other party members at the end of an adventure in order to increase the survivors' experience awards.

How much damage does a two-handed staff do? How is it different from a one-handed staff?

A staff is always used with two hands. Its base damage is 1-6 hp (*Expert Rulebook*, page 19). A "one-handed staff" is just a club.

What is a concealed door?

A concealed door is a door or portal that has been physically hidden from view. The

portal could be behind a bookcase, covered with a layer of paint or plaster, or simply hidden behind a curtain. This is not the same as a secret door, which is constructed so that it appears to be something else entirely.

Can a good creature such as a gold dragon be convinced to join a party of adventurers?

Gold dragons generally have their own business to mind and rarely join parties of adventurers. If the party is trying to perform a great good deed, however (such as rescuing an important person, driving off a particularly evil wizard or monster, or other heroic and self-sacrificing task), a gold dragon might be persuaded to join the group, provided that: the dragon thinks that the mission is important; at least 90% of the PCs are of lawful alignment (and none are chaotic); and, the dragon is offered a generous share of any treasure gained on the adventure. If the dragon is very young, this would have to be a share bigger than what is given any particular PC; the older the dragon, the more it would demand, so that a dragon of adult age or older would have to be promised the majority of the treasure. Apply these same principles to requests for aid from other good creatures.

How can the effects of yellow mold spores be removed?

The effects of yellow mold spores can be removed with a *neutralize poison* spell (*Expert Rulebook*, page 8).

When can ability-score points be exchanged?

You may only switch ability-score points when you're generating a character. Once a character starts play, you have to leave his ability scores as they are. You might, of course, find certain magical spells or items that allow you to alter your character's scores (or alter them without your consent!), but this is up to your DM.

My dictionary defines a crossbow as a device for hurling rocks or arrows. Is this correct? If so, why can't clerics use crossbows, since rocks are blunt weapons?

Your dictionary is correct. Crossbows were sometimes used to hurl small rocks and similar bulletlike projectiles, but this was not very common because quarrels had much better range and ability to penetrate heavy armor. The only reason rocks and such were used in warfare at all is because they were cheaper and easier to find than quarrels. If you want to use this option in the D&D game, reduce the range by one-third and the damage to 1-4 (light crossbow) or 1-6 (heavy crossbow) when using pellets or stones.

It might interest you to learn that blunt arrows and quarrels were invented in the late Stone Age and are still used today. They kill birds and small game (like squirrels) without mangling them and rendering them inedible.

In any case, bows and crossbows are still off-limits to clerics. Clerics are too busy studying spells to have time to learn the use of these weapons. This limitation is also desirable from the point of view of game balance. Keeping such missile weapons out of the hands of clerics gives players a reason for choosing fighters or demi-humans.

How long is a melee round? Exactly how many times can a character or creature attack during a melee round?

A D&D game melee round is 10 seconds long. A creature gets the number of attacks listed in the "Attacks" row in its description each round. A character may make one attack or cast one spell each round (except for high-level fighters and demi-humans, as per the Companion Set).

How do you determine how fast a character can move?

Movement for characters is given on the Encumbered Movement Rates Table on page 30 of the Basic Set *Players Manual*. A character who is exploring a dungeon normally moves a number of feet per turn according to his encumbrance (see "Normal Speed" column). If the character gets into a fight, he moves fewer feet per round ("Encounter Speed"). The character may run at the rate given in the "Running Speed" column, but he can't map, fight, cast spells, or do anything except run.

What is the difference between chain mail and plate mail armor?

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Chain mail consists of padding covered by a mesh of steel links. The mesh protects the entire body. Plate mail is padding covered by light chain, with solid plates of metal covering the torso, shoulders, and limbs. Elbow and knee guards are also found with plate mail.

What are the abilities of the different kinds of elves found in the D&D game?

There is only one kind of elf in the D&D game, just like there is only one kind of human. You might introduce racial subtypes for all the races for the sake of variety; I recommend that you keep any differences superficial, so that any subtype of each race still uses the same rules.

I remember an article in DRAGON Magazine that said elves make the best archers of any fantasy race. Why, then, don't elves get some sort of bonus when firing bows in the D&D game?

Opinions expressed in the DRAGON Magazine are not official unless labeled as such. The author of the article you read was fully entitled to express his opinion about the quality of elven archers, but that does not affect the D&D game, however. The author was probably referring to the AD&D® game, in which elves are quite different from those in the D&D game.

The reason elves in the D&D game don't have a special ability with bows is game balance. Elves in the D&D game already have a lot of abilities, such as infravision, immunity to ghoul paralysis, and the ability to cast magic-user spells while wearing armor. Elves can also fight almost as well as fighters. This is quite enough to put them on a par with the other character classes.

What, exactly, is encumbrance?

Encumbrance is simply the amount of treasure and equipment a character can carry. Encumbrance is measured in units of weight equal to one coin (cn). The more weight carried, the slower the character moves. The table on page 30 of the Basic Set *Players Book* gives character movement rates at different encumbrances. The tables on page 19 of the *Expert Rulebook* gives weights in coins for various equipment. If you are not using the Expert Set, assume that each fully equipped PC has normal (400 cn) encumbrance.

When a character uses a wand of magic detection or a wand of enemy detection, who can see the glow when a magical or unfriendly object is revealed? How long does the glow last?

Any character who can see the object(s) revealed can see the glow. If the view is obstructed by a solid object (such as a chest), not even the user can see the glow. This means that a camouflaged creature spotted with a *wand of enemy detection*

would appear as a glowing spot under the camouflage. Anything spotted by a wand glows for one round.

Which monsters have infravision?

All monsters, except normal animals and creatures who don't have eyes (such as green slime), have infravision. Note that eyeless creatures have ways other than sight to detect prey and enemies, and they function equally well in light or darkness.

Is a character using infravision still subject to gaze attacks, such as that of a medusa?

Yes, the character with infravision can "see" the medusa.

Can a character using infravision see undead creatures?

Yes, they appear cold (blue) and can only be seen dimly. Optionally, skeletons might have the same temperature as the room around them, thus being "invisible" to infravision.

Can a character using infravision see invisible creatures such as a magic-user using an invisibility spell or ring? Could the character see a thief hiding in shadows?

An invisibility spell or ring also defeats infravision. Infravision might reveal a thief hidden in shadows. If there is a heat source nearby (a torch or fire), infravision is spoiled and the thief remains hidden. If there is no heat source, infravision reveals the thief.

Can a character with infravision use a mirror to look around a corner?

Only with great difficulty. Mirrors do not reflect infrared light very well. Only creatures who are very close can be seen in the mirror, and only if there are no other heat sources nearby.

Do character levels equal hit dice?

For example, can a 5th-level magic-user be affected by a sleep spell?

According to the monster lists, hu-

mans have only one hit die.

Levels equal hit dice in this case. The 5th-level magic-user (or any other character of 5th level or above) in your example is immune to *sleep* spells.

Can PC magic-users or elves add spells that they find into their spell books?

Yes, PC magic-users and elves can copy spells from scrolls or "captured" spell books into their own spell books. In either case, the copied spell disappears from its original scroll or book when it is copied into the PC's book.

The DM can impose time or money requirements on copying spells into books. The section on destroyed spell books (*Expert Rulebook*, page 26) is a good guide.

What is the penalty for a cleric using an edged weapon or a magic-user using a sword?

No character will willingly use a weapon that is not allowed to his class. No penalty need apply — just don't allow it. In a life-or-death situation, a character might be allowed to pick up a restricted weapon — violating the principles of one's profession is better than being dead — but this would have to be a desperation move, and you should assess hit-roll and damage penalties. I suggest -4 to the hit roll and -2 to damage (1 hp damage minimum).

What is the highest level a character can attain?

All human classes are limited to 36th level. The demi-human limits are: Dwarf 12, Elf 10, and Halfling 8. Demi-humans can gain extra skills after they have reached maximum level. The D&D Expert, Companion, and Masters Sets cover the higher levels of play.

What is the best saving throw a character can have?

The lowest possible saving throw is a 2. No matter how high a character's level and how many magical protections he has, a roll of 1 always fails a save. There is no best saving throw — just a successful one.



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What do "1-in-6" and "2-in-6" mean?

The term "1-in-6" refers to one chance out of 6, or a roll of 1 on a six-sided die (1d6). Similarly, "2-in-6" means a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d6.

If a human had a child by an elf or dwarf, wouldn't the offspring be a half-elf or half-dwarf? Why aren't there rules for such characters?

The D&D game does not consider cross-breeds, mostly for reasons of simplicity. Since introducing a new demi-human character type would require constructing a whole new character class, we don't recommend trying it. When dealing with characters of mixed parentage, the DM should decide if the races in question could have children in the first place, then treat the character the same as a full member of one race or the other. Most human/demi-human crossbreeds should be treated as humans.

How many hit points does a character regain when he eats his rations?

None. Characters have to eat to stay alive. Food provides sustenance but does not heal wounds.

How do you determine a character's hit points at 1st level? When a character gains a level, how do you determine his new hit points?

At 1st level, roll the character's hit die and adjust for constitution (see the Basic Set *Players Manual*, page 50, 1983 edition). Some DMs allow 1st-level characters to reroll the first hit die if 1 hp is rolled, since 1 hp characters usually don't survive their first adventures. When a character gains a level, he gets a new hit die (except after "name" level). Simply roll the new die, adjust for constitution, and add the total to the character's old hit points.

Exactly how much food does a pack of iron rations contain?

A standard pack of iron rations lasts one week. It is up to the DM whether this

equates to 7, 14 or 21 meals — I suggest 14 (two meals a day).

Can a character turned to stone by a medusa ever be turned back?

A wish from an item or powerful spell-caster will restore a "stoned" character. Generally, however, petrification is removed by the sixth-level magic-user spell *stone to flesh*. It takes a magic-user of at least 12th level to cast this spell (see the Expert Set).

How many experience points are normal and giant rats worth?

A normal rat has an experience-point value of 1; a giant rat has an experience-point value of 6.

What is the armor class of a sprite?

A sprite has an armor class of 5.

How long does a character who drinks a potion of gaseous form stay in gaseous form?

The character remains gaseous as long as the potion lasts; a potion of *gaseous form* has the standard potion duration 7-12 turns, or 70-120 seconds.

Do breath weapons and other area effects (like *fireballs* from the Expert Set) hit automatically?

Breath weapons and other area effects require no "to hit" roll. Creatures in the area must save against the attack or suffer its full effects..

Exactly which weapons can a halfling use? Which weapons can dwarves use?

Halflings are too small to use normal-sized weapons such as regular swords, and they may not use two-handed weapons. Weapons usable by halflings include: whip, club, war hammer, mace, short sword, blowgun, bola, short bow, light crossbow, sling, hand axe, dagger, throwing hammer, javelin, spear, and trident. All of these weapons are from the various D&D boxed sets. If the rules that you are using don't include all these weapons,

ignore them for now.

Some Lake Geneva campaigns allow halflings to use regular one-handed weapons (such as swords) as two-handed weapons. A halfling using a normal weapon this way would do standard damage, but could not use a shield and would automatically lose initiative. This is a variant.

Dwarves can use any weapons except long bows and two-handed swords.

How do you run missile fire?

You run missile fire the same way you run melee. Just remember the missiles' rates of fire and range modifiers.

Is there any way to regain lost hit points except the *cure light wounds* spell?

Resting can also restore lost hit points. One full day of rest restores 1 hp. After a full week of rest, the character regains 5 hp for each day thereafter. A full month of rest restores all lost hit points. Characters are assumed to sleep, eat, and drink as necessary while resting.

Is there anything special about holy symbols, or are they just "window dressing"?

Holy symbols are not magical items and do not have any extraordinary properties or powers. It is generally assumed, however, that a cleric must have his holy symbol to cast spells or turn undead.

Are creatures that are immune to normal weapons also immune to paralysis? Are undead monsters immune to paralysis?

Paralysis can effect any creature that fails its saving throw against it.

Can a character wear just one of a pair of *gauntlets of ogre power* and gain increased strength in only half of his body?

Both gauntlets must be worn in order to gain any benefit at all.

How many charges does a rod have?

Rods in the D&D game are permanently enchanted items, unless the rod's description states otherwise. They don't use charges.

How do you determine the encumbrance of a miscellaneous magical item?

It is the same as a normal item of the same type, unless the item's description states otherwise.

How do you determine the experience-point value of a monster?

If you have 1983 edition books, the experience-point value of each monster is calculated for you; award experience points for each monster defeated. If you are using the experience-point chart in-

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stead (*Basic Set Dungeon Masters Rule-book*, page 12), start with the base value for the monster's hit dice, then add the bonus for any special abilities (once for each asterisk).

I don't really understand how to keep time or why time keeping is even necessary.

There isn't really much to understand about time keeping in the D&D game. In fact, if you are a player, you don't have to worry about it at all.

The basic unit of time in the game is one turn, which equals 10 minutes. The other unit of time in the game is the round, which is 10 seconds long. Both turns and rounds represent game time that passes for the player characters — not for the players. Game time is "make believe," just like everything else in the game, and has no relationship to real time.

You have to keep track of game time so that you know when your player character needs to rest, and when any spells that he casts will run out. You keep time by simply keeping track of what the PC does, and recording the rounds or turns that are used up as a result. Exactly how much time a PC uses depends on what he does. Exploring a dungeon requires that a PC move about; how much time this takes depends on how fast he can move. In a fight, each character can normally make one attack or cast one spell per round. Overland travel is generally measured in game days; this is more fully explained in the Expert Set.

Time keeping can be easier if you mark off units of time as they are used. There is a sample time track in the Masters Set *Master DM's Book*, as well as a whole set of time charts in "Time Flies . . ." by Lisa Cabala, in DRAGON issue #123.

Will a character turned into a vampire retain any character abilities? Can such a character still use his magical items? Can lycanthropes carry or use magical items?

A character turned into a vampire or lycanthrope becomes a monster under the DM's control, unless the character's fate is changed by a *wish*. Whether or not the new vampire retains any of his former abilities is up to the DM.

A vampire can wear or use any magical item that it could have used in life (although it couldn't use wands, staves, or scrolls unless it has retained magic-user abilities). Lycanthropes can use magic while in their human forms, but they discard and ignore any items carried when they take animal form. A lycanthrope always takes animal form when it attacks or is attacked.

FORUM

(continued from page 6)

written to give the effectiveness of one level higher than the minimum level needed to cast the spell, which makes *armor* scrolls second level in effect, and which gives the magic-user twice as many bonus hit points as his own casting gives. Also, scrollmakers tend to keep such scrolls for their own use, and they might well boost the effective level of a scroll of *armor* to give themselves extra protection. With luck, they may forget to charge extra for such scrolls or mistakenly give the higher-level scroll to their customer.)

Pay an illusionist to cast phantom armor on your character's robe, and if you have a DM who goes by the letter of the rules rather than the spirit, have the spell put on the inside. (Technically, the armor-class and damage reductions are in effect whether the attacker sees the *phantom armor* or not. Wearing it inside-out merely prevents an attacker from realizing what is being used and thereby disbelieving and eliminating the *armor*. (Presumably, "Sage Advice" will close this loophole in the near future, but until then, we gonna have fun!)

Magic-users are not supposed to get into fights. Using that precept, I've managed to develop quite a few high-level magic-users and illusionists. I don't need a bunch of minor rule changes made to get my characters developed, and neither should you.

Larry Madden
Glendale CA

I just finished reading an article in the "Forum" of issue #122 of DRAGON Magazine. I feel that [W. Brian Barnes's] letter is well-written, [but] this is going just a little too far.

To me, this insults the basic nature of the magic-using class. Playing the part of a magic-user has to be the most challenging, fun activity that there is because of the great diversity and power that is gained by spell use. In the past year to year and a half, I have played only magic-users in our long Saturday-night gaming sessions.

One thing that I have found is that first-level spells are probably the most useful and most powerful spells available in the entire spell list. For the past two months, I have played a magic-user with almost no offensive spells at all, but he has still proven his services are invaluable to

the party with cantrips such as *clean*, *stitch*, and *warm*. In one instance, the PCs needed to interrogate a prisoner, so my PC used a *color* cantrip while threatening to give him gangrene all over his body. He didn't believe my PC, who then cast the spell, turning the prisoner an odd shade of green. Needless to say, the NPC gave out his best-kept secrets. Other spells, such as *mending* and *identify*, can also be of great benefit.

Giving a 1st-level magic-user extra spells due to high intelligence is giving too much power to the magic-user. If you don't like that imbalance which clerics possess, then don't let your clerics have their high wisdom bonuses.

Knowledge of cantrips? Give me a break! Every monster in the book would be tripping, belching, blinking, etc., several times per encounter after the offensive spells run out! Armor and weapons? Magic-users are not fighters!

Also, if the DM doesn't want a sorcerer to be powerful at high levels, then he or she does not have to give them the more powerful spells. Game balance is in the hands of the DM, not in the books, and not in the ideals of the PCs. If the magic-user is in real trouble, he should first go to his fellow adventurers for help. If that is futile, the DM should lighten up the pressure.

To give last light to the ending paragraph, I don't feel any sympathy for the 1st-level magic-user. When 1st-level PCs are together, they had better stay together or else they will pay the consequences. A monk will always be lesser to the magic-user at any level unless acquiring some major magics. So sympathize with them? No way!

To the following letter by Jeanne McGuire of State College, Pa., I like the first part about having 40 spells and being able to learn all of them with a 19 intelligence. The limit of 22 is acceptable to me, but as for the rest, I am a bit skeptical. To each his own.

The last bit of info which I would like to discuss is weapon specialization. It is unfair to all of the other PC classes to let only fighters and rangers dish out so much more extra damage than anyone else. But, since it is in print and probably accepted all around the nation, why not let magic-users become specialized at casting spells? Just use the number of spells knowable as proficiency slots, and have one extra proficiency slot per level used to become specialized, thus reducing the casting time by half or making it possible to cast quick spells at a rate of two per round instead of only one. For example: A 3rd-level mage with an 18 intelligence wants to become specialized in *magic missile*. It is a first-level spell, so it takes one

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extra slot, leaving only 16 other slots for spells. The spell thus takes only one-half segment to cast; otherwise, the magic-user is able to cast two *magic missile* spells in one round. Or let's say a 6th-level magic-user with a 16 intelligence can know up to 14 spells. To become specialized in a *fireball*, a third-level spell, it would take three extra slots, leaving a total of 10 other spell slots. As a result, there wouldn't be many people crazy enough to be specialized in high-level spells such as *wish* because they couldn't have many other spells.

This may look like a crazy idea, but so is a ranger doing a minimum of 10 hp damage from a normal *arrow + 1* per level, without strength additions or magic bonuses, etc. Imagine a 10th-level ranger with an 18/00 strength, a *bow +2*, and *arrows +2*: too much #@&\$?! power!

Bruce Johnson
Anchorage AK

Mr. Barnes talked about trying to balance the magic-user at low levels [in issue #122]. A magic-user should receive spell bonuses for exceptional intelligence. A smart mage should get a greater benefit from his intelligence than merely having a greater selection of spells to try to choose from. As Jeanne McGuire said in her following letter, "Hence the tie-in to intelligence: the smarter mage can keep track of more sets of data [astrological data, manna fields, etc. in spell-casting] at once." Next is the permanent knowledge of some cantrips. This bonus should only be bestowed upon mages with intelligence of 18 or greater, as it is already easy enough for a magic-user of average intelligence to be able to cast many cantrips. Again, this is another use of high intelligence for mages.

Another issue is allowing magic-users to wear light armor. During a magic-user's early stages (1st-4th levels), his spells are simple and easy to cast. Therefore, padded or leather armor would not restrict his movement enough to interfere with spell-casting. As the higher levels are reached, however, spells become more complex and difficult to cast, so he would have to shed his protective coverings. In addition, he is now ready to face the dangers of adventuring with more hit points and spells with which to defend himself. Giving the mage additional weapons and fighting abilities is unnecessary, as he is a magic-user, not a fighter!

The last idea Mr. Barnes suggested was that of using "spell points." I've seen this system used with other games and it works well. A low-level magic-user with few spells to cast would be much better off with such freedom. I also feel, however, that this ability would become unbalancing at higher levels, and such an ability should be phased out as the magic-user increases in level. There are many reasons for forcing the magic-user to start memorizing his spells again. For one, he is able to cast many more spells now, and he should now be able to assemble a wide variety of spells from past experience. The second argument I shall associate with another spell-caster, the cleric. A cleric is able to receive his lowest-level prayers and spells on his own or at a local temple. As the spells progress in power, the spells come from higher places, more important temples, demigods, and — for the highest spells — the cleric's own deity. Well, a magic-user is easily able to keep track of the knowledge of lower-level spells, but as they increase in complexity, their knowledge comes less easily, thus requiring

outright memorization. All of this new data for the higher-level spells and the knowledge of all the lower spells begins to clutter his mind. To solve this problem, he has to organize this information and select only the knowledge of how to cast certain spells at a time.

These are just my ideas about how to create additional abilities for low-level magic-users, and I am sure that other people have many more. I hope that such ideas help the many pitiful mages out there. Maybe such abilities should be considered while the AD&D game is being revised.

Keith Sutton
Alliance NE

Recently, a magic-user in my campaign grew out of her old spell book — she'd discovered a cache of scrolls she needed to transcribe — and asked me how one would go about fashioning a standard spell book. Checking *Unearthed Arcana*, I discovered something totally ridiculous: Those things are supposed to be 6" thick! Not only is there nothing in this world that compares to this (I measured the complete works of Shakespeare and didn't even hit 4½"), it makes life very difficult for the average magic-user with a strength of 9.

Where does this volume come from? One spell to a page, correct? Considering that the vellum used is as thick as the cardboard used to bind hardback books (Shakespeare gets to be pretty handy!), about one-eighth inch, I'd say that the thickest standard spell book would be 3". Eighteen sheets of vellum — a cantrip on each side — stacks up to a bit more than 2". Add heavier leather and metal bindings, and there's 3".

If someone wants to write in and tell me how wrong I am, go ahead. I'd be interested to see how they came up with these silly dimensions (I'm still baffled by the height and width). Until then, let's show a bit of concern for the mages of our worlds, who certainly should have the right to carry something besides spell books in their backpacks.

Elisabeth Atwood
Princeton NJ

I was just reading your July issue (#123) when I spotted some flaws in a couple of arguments which I would like to point out.

Eric Krein's mistakes are simple ones caused by a failure to examine the use a magic-user has for a given spell book. By letting form follow function, one can see that a traveling spell book would need to store all the spells known and collected by the mage during his adventures. It would also have to be able to survive the dangers faced on an average adventure. This would dictate the need for a book with an armored cover and pages made of the thinnest possible material, possible choices being silk or gold leaf.

On the other hand, the standard spell book is made for a quiet life in a wizard's library, where the book serves the same general function as a hoard serves a dragon. This kind of spell book would not need a high volume-to-weight ratio, so decoration would replace armor.

It should also be noted that one cantrip equals one-fourth of a first-level spell. This means that a traveling spell book can hold 72 cantrips and a standard spell book can hold 288 cantrips.

The other letter, by Leung Chi Kong on the subject of waterborne combat and naval fire-power, also deserves to be challenged because of a misinterpreted passage quoted from issue #116. This passage illustrates that a magical counterpart to cannons would evolve for use on warships in the same way that magic wands are used as guns and flying brooms are used as

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airplanes. There is no reason why enchantments used on smaller weapons can't be applied to siege engines to give cannonlike effects.

To prove my point, I'm giving examples of magical counterparts to real weapons:

Example 1: An ogre in full plate (AC 1), armed with a pole cleaver, long bow, an assortment of magic arrows, and a *wand of wonder*; on a triceratops in plate mail, is about equal to a tank.

Example 2: A dragon is equal to a B-52 in capabilities without any help. With some magic, he can be equal to a space shuttle.

When the Lord Nelson of a fantastic world is confronted by his ramming fleet, he should be able to call forth magic equal to cannons. He may even have subs and carriers.

Douglas M. Burck
Cincinnati OH

I would like to respond to Ed Friedlander's suggestion in issue #126 that chaotic-aligned characters be regularly and arbitrarily placed in jail to provide a reason for adventuring. He claims the players like this. His players may like it, but I believe many players prefer to control their characters actions. The DM has no right to force a character to commit a crime. The situation may arise, but only in role-playing or by agreement.

Stephen C. Paylor
Towson MD
Ω

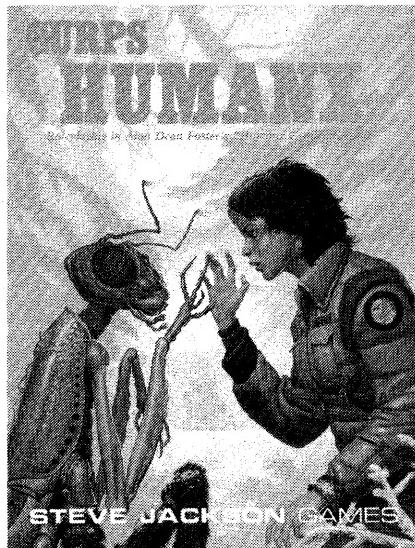
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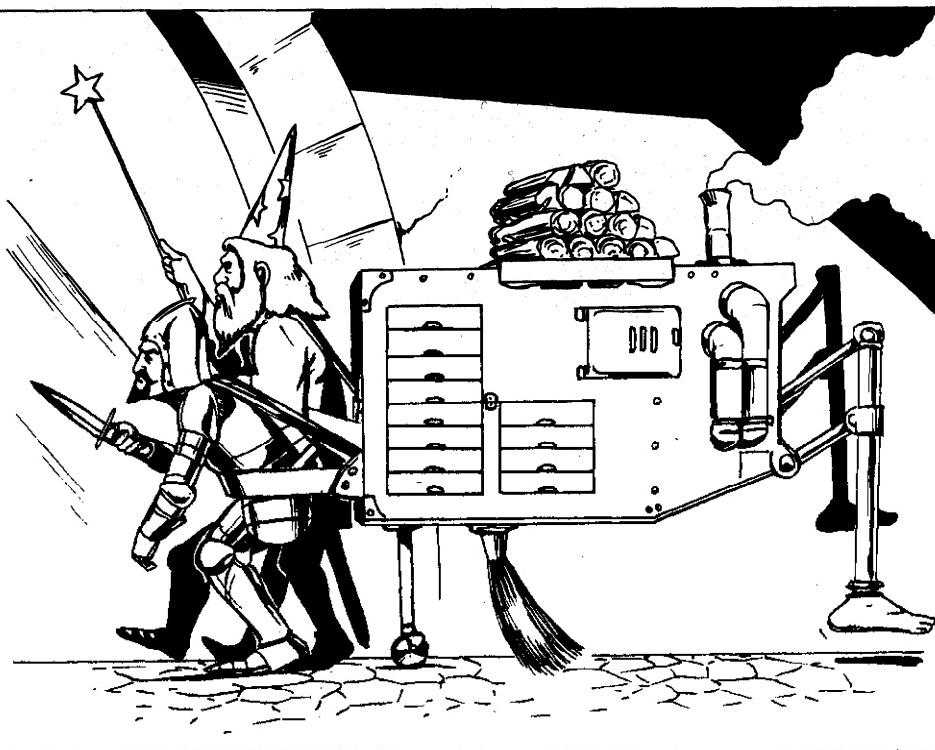


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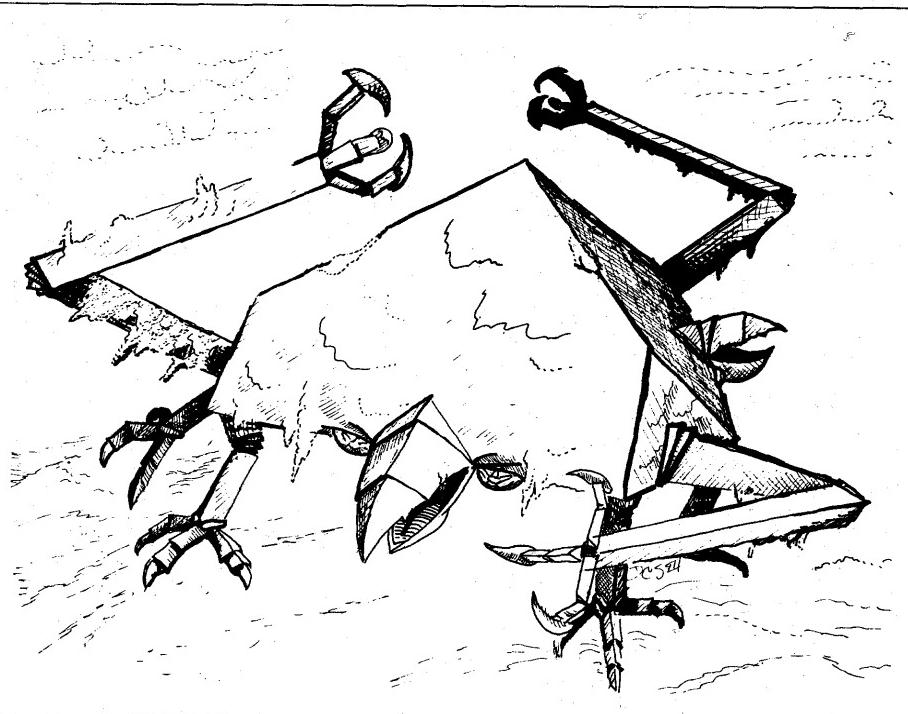
The Dragon's Bestiary

Colder than ice

by Dean Shomshak

There are quite a few monsters from the planes of Air, Earth, Fire, and Water, but as yet, the only creatures from the para-elemental planes are the para-elementals

themselves. Now, what Dungeon Master could resist a challenge like that? Presented for your enjoyment are four denizens of the para-elemental plane of Ice, ready to be summoned by wizards or slip through nexus points to your local glacier or snowstorm.



SHIVERBUG

FREQUENCY: Rare (Common on home plane)
NO. APPEARING: 3-18
ARMOR CLASS: 5
MOVE: 9"
HIT DICE: 2
% IN LAIR: Nil
TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*
NO. ATTACKS: Up to 4 (claw/claw/claw/bite)
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-3/1-3/1-3/1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Shiver venom; surprise* on 1-5 in snow or ice
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Resistances to various attack forms*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
INTELLIGENCE: Semi- to low
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
SIZE: S (2-3' diameter, 1-1½' high)
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
LEVEL/XP VALUE: III/44 + 2 per hp

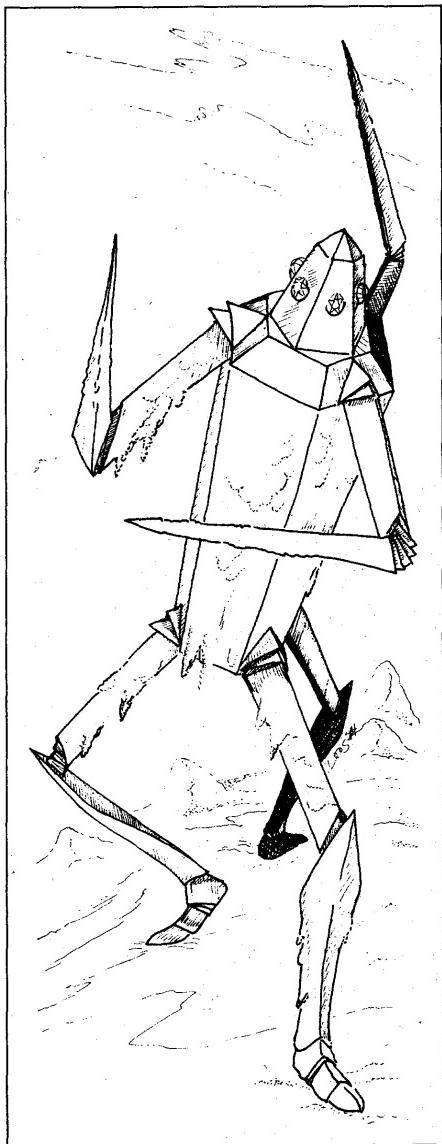
Shiverbugs are very minor elementals from the plane of Ice. Their flattened bodies are hexagons with alternating long and short sides, with a short leg ending in a trifurcate claw at each vertex (six in all). Between and above each pair of legs on the three short sides of the body is a 2'-long arm ending in three-fingered nippers. In the middle of each long side is a trifurcate beak between a pair of eyes. Shiverbugs are composed entirely of cloudy white ice, except for their eyes which are of glittering clear ice.

In each round of combat, shiverbugs have a single biting attack and up to three pincer attacks; they can only use two of their pincers on a single target, so unless there are two or more properly placed opponents near a shiverbug, it gets only two nipper attacks. If a bite attack succeeds, the shiverbug also injects a frigid venom into the victim, who must save vs. poison or immediately start shivering from extreme cold (dexterity drops 1-3 points, automatic -1 on "to hit" rolls, effects last for one turn). The effects of multiple or sequential attacks are cumulative.

Being used to extreme cold, shiverbugs are immune to all cold-related attacks; being inorganic and chemically-inert, they are not affected by chemical attacks — acid, alkalis, poison, or even ghoul paralysis. Fire and intense heat, however, do double damage.

Like many of the lesser elementals, shiverbugs do not look for trouble, but they are easily annoyed. For instance, stepping on one shiverbug will rile the whole pack. This event is not as improbable as it might seem, since shiverbugs are easy to overlook when they squat motionless in the snow and ice in which they dwell while on the Prime Material plane. They do not collect treasure and do not have true lairs.

Illustrations by Dave Sutherland



ICELING

FREQUENCY: *Very rare (Common on home plane)*
 NO. APPEARING: *1-6 (4-24 on home plane)*
 ARMOR CLASS: 7
 MOVE: 9"
 HIT DICE: 4
 % IN LAIR: *Nil*
 TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*
 NO. ATTACKS: Up to 3
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6/1-6/1-6
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Spells*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Resistances to various attack forms*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Low*
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
 SIZE: *M*
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
 LEVEL/XP VALUE: *IV/150 + 4 per hp*

Icelings are lesser inhabitants of the plane of Ice. Like the other minor elements, once in a while they slip through nexus points to the Prime Material plane. Naturally, icelings are usually met on or

near glaciers or other icy, snowy regions. They are triradial beings standing about as tall as a man, with three arms, three legs, and a hexagonal body. The head is also six-sided, with one bright eye in each side, and it rises to a blunt, pyramid-like point. Icelings are made entirely of cloudy ice. They radiate the intense cold of their home plane, but not enough to do damage at a distance. One-third of the 1-6 hp damage done by a stab from an iceling's arm, however, is from the effects of intense cold on soft body tissues; opponents who are immune to cold take only 1-4 hp damage. Icelings are immune to cold attacks themselves, as well as chemical attacks, while fire attacks do double damage to them.

Icelings also have limited magic powers. Once per turn, each iceling can create a *snow cloud*: a 20' x 20' x 20' zone of whirling snow lasting 4 rounds. Its effects are much like those of a *stinking cloud*, as those caught within are blinded and disoriented, stuck within for 2-5 rounds (the *snow* cloud's effects can last a round longer than the cloud itself), unless they save vs. poison. Even those who make the save will be occupied with clearing eyes and nose of snow for a round. Special circumstances, like a visored helm or some other protection, may reduce or even totally negate the snow cloud's effects. Characters suffer the usual penalties for inability to see an opponent while they are in a *snow cloud*. Also, once per day three icelings together can create an *ice storm* equal to one cast by a 6th-level magic-user. They have no other magical powers.

Icelings do not collect treasure and are usually inoffensive if not disturbed. Sometimes they spontaneously throw snow clouds around other creatures, apparently just for the fun of it.

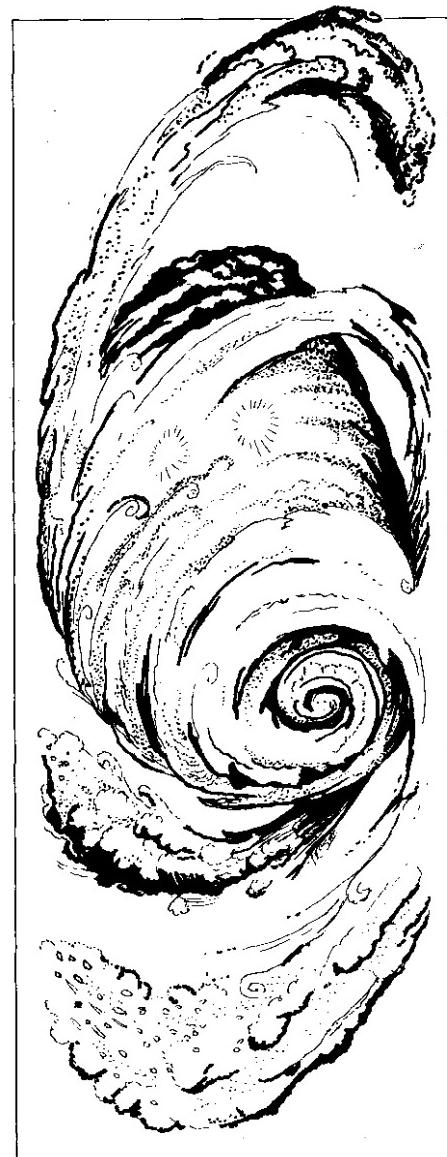
SNOWFURY

FREQUENCY: *Very rare (Uncommon on home plane)*
 NO. APPEARING: *1 (1-4 on home plane)*
 ARMOR CLASS: 5
 MOVE: /18" (MC: C)
 HIT DICE: 6
 % IN LAIR: *Nil*
 TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*
 NO. ATTACKS: 3
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5/2-5/2-5
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Blinding; envelop*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Cold affinity; weapon resistance*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Low*
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
 SIZE: *M (large volume, but diffuse)*
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
 LEVEL/XP VALUE: *V/450 + 6 per hp*

Like the other ice para-elements, snowfuries occasionally slip through nexus points to wander glaciers and snowfields. Usually they seem to be no more than

snow-laden gusts of wind. In this condition, they are harmless and probably won't be noticed. Fire enrages them, however, and on sensing a fire, they gather themselves into denser form and rush to put out the offending fire. A snowfury will also attack any nearby creatures its limited intellect connects with the fire. High winds put snowfuries into a manic state in which they may randomly attack other creatures. Fortunately, snowfuries are not very persistent; indeed, they are a bit scatterbrained.

In combat, the snowfury continually extrudes and reabsorbs tentacles of snow and ice pellets. It can attack with three of these tentacles per round, each tentacle doing 2-5 hp damage from the combination of intense cold and impact by numerous sharp bits of ice. All three attacks can be on a single target. Opponents who are resistant to cold still take 1-3 hp damage per attack. If the snowfury gets a 20 on its attack roll, it has managed to get snow in its opponent's eyes, blinding him for a round. A snowfury can also try to envelop a single human- or smaller-size opponent;



to do this, it must make a special attack roll, foregoing all other attacks in that round. The victim takes 2-7 hp damage that round and on all subsequent rounds until he escapes the snowfury's grip. Escape is made by making a successful attack against the snowfury. The victim is also blinded, as if by a *snow cloud* (see the iceling's description) while enveloped, and this special "escape attack" is the only attack he can make that will not be penalized because of his blindness. Even after escaping, the victim is still blinded for one round. While holding an enveloped victim, a snowfury can still make one normal attack. Attacks upon a snowfury have a strong chance of also hitting an enveloped victim, who takes half the damage the weapon does. The only way to avoid this is to make a second "to hit" roll against the snowfury: the first to hit the snowfury,

the second to avoid hitting the trapped victim.

Snowfurys are not hard to hit, but their diffuse nature means that weapons — even magic weapons — only do half damage to them. (*Flame tongue* swords are an obvious exception; see below.) Their icy composition means that snowfurys take 1½ times normal damage from all fiery attacks. On the other hand, they regain hit points from cold-based attacks like white dragon's breath or ice *storm*: if cold damage is measured in dice, then 1 hp per die of the attack is healed; otherwise, the number of hit points healed equals one-eighth the hit-point damage of the attack (round fractions down). Finally, if the ambient temperature is below freezing and there is ice or snow in the vicinity, snowfurys regenerate 1 hp per five rounds.

reach, each doing 2-12 hp damage — 1-6 hp from jagged flakes of ice, and 1-6 hp from the frigidarch's intense cold. Anyone not immune to cold takes 2-5 hp damage from contact with a frigidarch, and even *resist cold* only reduces this to 1-3 hp damage. (This only applies to contact other than the frigidarch's attacks, of course.) This cold extends in an aura 10' out from the main body, doing 1-3 hp damage per round to those not resistant to cold or not warmly dressed.

Naturally, frigidarchs are immune to all cold attacks; in fact, such attacks heal damage to a frigidarch, 1 hp healed per die of normal damage, or one-eighth normal damage if the attack damage isn't measured in dice. Fire, on the other hand, does 1½ times normal damage (round down). The frigidarchs are only hit by weapons with a +1 or better enchantment, and they are immune to poison, gas, acids, alkalis, all other chemical attacks, paralysis, and petrification. In a pinch, frigidarchs can meld into ice and snow exactly as a xorn merges with stone. They regenerate 2 hp per round if the temperature is below freezing.

Finally, frigidarchs have magical powers. They freeze water by touch, up to 100 square feet per round, and the ice will be 1" thick for every segment the frigidarch spends creating it (to a maximum thickness of 6"). Beyond that, the ice insulates the water beneath, so that further freezing is impractical. Frigidarchs are also uncannily skilled at fracturing ice with slashes of their tentacles. Fractures are not more than 10' long or over 1' deep, but the limits and uses of this skill are left to the DM's imagination. Once per five rounds, frigidarchs can use *change temperature* (always producing colder temperatures), *snow cloud* (equal to that of an iceling, but lasting 12 rounds), *chill metal* (the reverse-of *heat metal*), or *wall of ice*. Three times per day, once per turn, they can use *cone of cold*, *ice storm*, or *summon* creatures from the plane of Ice with 80% success. These will be:

1d100 Result

- 01-30 3-12 shiverbugs
- 31-60 2-7 icelings
- 61-80 1-4 snowfurys
- 81-00 1-2 ice para-elementals

All spells are cast as if by a 12th-level spell-caster of the appropriate type. Frigidarchs are capable of fighting with three tentacles while using the other three to cast these innate magical powers. Finally, once per week, a frigidarch can *control weather*, lowering temperatures by 30°F within a one-mile radius for 5-8 hours; if the temperature began at 40°F or less, the temperature change and duration are both 1½ times greater, and the frigidarch can add a stiff wind to make an impressive local blizzard. Damage from exposure to such inclement weather is covered in the *Wilderness Survival Guide*.



FRIGIDARCH

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 1

MOVE: 9"

HIT DICE: 12

% IN LAIR: 75%

TREASURE TYPE: Nil

NO. ATTACKS: Up to 6

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12/2-12/2-12/2-12/
2-12/2-12

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Spells; cold aura; summoning*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 60%

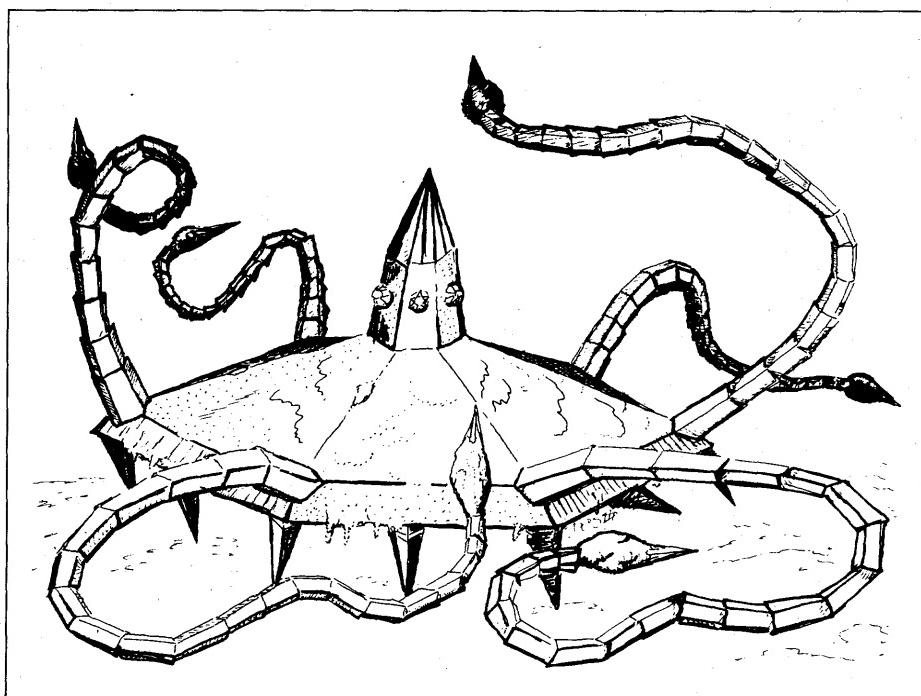
INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

SIZE: L (6'high, 8'diameter, 15' arms)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

LEVEL/XP VALUE: IX/9,600 + 16 per hp



The Game Wizards

A volume of Oerthly delights

by James M. Ward

This month's column offers a golden opportunity to all AD&D® game fans. I am in charge of assembling the GREYHAWK™ Adventures hardback book, to be released at the 1988 GEN CON® games fair. I have a fairly good idea of what will be put into the volume, and I'll present these ideas in this article — but I am also open for input from you, the readers of DRAGON® Magazine. If you have some ideas about materials that you feel *must* be placed in the manual, send those ideas to me. I'll send an autographed book back to those people whose ideas I use. Write to:

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Please don't expect a reply to your wonderful ideas unless your ideas are picked. Write in for fun.

There are a lot of things I want to throw into the book that haven't been in books like this before, though I'll have to check the production costs with the purchasing department to make sure the ideas don't make the book unprofitable. It would be nice to see some full-color plates in the book, as well as full-page black-and-white art from the TSR house artists.

The lands of Greyhawk have a lot of game history behind them. Many special characters, deities, monsters, and magical items appear in WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ setting products. The book will bring them together and expand upon them. GREYHAWK Adventures will thus be useful for both the player and the DM, by providing a wide variety of material that the players can use for ideas and that the DM can easily place in the ongoing campaign.

With all of the above in mind, here are some things I'm considering for use in the book:

1. Greyhawk's Hall of Heroes:

Through the years, many interesting

characters from Oerth have been described for game use, in publications like Rogues Gallery, the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting booklets, and DRAGON Magazine. This section would have full-page art, and would include game and historical statistics on 10-15 characters who are still active across the Flanaess. Imagine tales of the mighty Robilar in all his glory, with notes on his life, times, associates, and anything else that would make interesting springboards for adventures with player characters.

2. Greyhawk's Book of Creatures: Through the years, there have also been many useful monsters (at least, from the DM's point of view) that could each receive an illustration and detailed treatment in a single page. This section could have 10-20 creatures and their typical lairs. Picture the scene as a *golden knight* stalks the halls of the underground warrens near the city of Greyhawk. This creature appears to be made of solid gold, but moves faster than the fastest horse. It's a walking treasure that refuses to sit still long enough to be collected.

3. Greyhawk's Books of Magic: There are several famous spell casters from the games and books — beings like Mordenkainen, Bigby, and Drawmij — who could have their (as yet unseen) spells jotted down for easy reference. Adventurers could find pages of spells written in

the hand of Drawmij himself. Low-level spells of new types could present themselves for the player and DM to use in their campaigns. Drawmij's spells of *magical transport* and *monster friendship* could become part of your PC's spell books.

4. Greyhawk's Magical Devices: A great many items from modules and the GREYHAWK™ novels could be placed in this book. The novels in particular have several types of magical items that would greatly enhance the role-playing aspect of any campaign. For example, there is a magical gem that greatly enhances the spell-casting ability and power of any magic-user. The gem is also oriented toward one sex or the other, so if a "male" gem gets in the hands of a female magic-user and she frequently employs its power, she becomes more and more masculine.

5. The Free City of Greyhawk: A lot has been going on around the city, and information on the types of forces near the city and the Wild Coast (and what they are doing) could be interesting to everyone. Imagine, for example, that the Free City of Greyhawk is filled with reports of huge deposits of gold, found where the Neen and Ery River meet. Thousands of beings of all types rush to the spot to find some of the yellow metal themselves — and the PCs come along as well.

Please note that I firmly believe that city of Greyhawk deserves special treatment in a product all its own. If you write to me, please give me your thoughts on what a "City of Greyhawk" book should include.

6. Greyhawk's Clerics and Temples: The deities of Greyhawk are very special, and more information about their clerics and temples could be of use to all Greyhawk gamers. Picture, for example, a full-page drawing of the largest temple to St. Cuthbert of the Cudgel, with details on the clerical order and some of the unusual features of the temple itself.

That's about the size of the product in its present form. There's room for major additions — especially if those great ideas come rolling in. Go to it!

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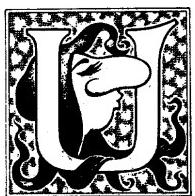
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lgerd Stufsdatter, looking like a large, undecided lemming, peered in through the door of the kitchen-house at her daughter Syrfrid. The girl sat on a bench, cutting meat out of a boiled hog's head for headcheese. She used her knife awkwardly, and a tear ran down either side of her proud nose. Syrfrid was a well-grown girl, red-haired and fat, with a walleye, but Ulgerd knew that, for all that, she had never been able to think of herself as pretty. Ulgerd went inside and tried to cheer her.

"Did you hear the one about the Lapp, the Wend, and the Frisian?" she asked.

Syrfrid looked at her, one eye at a time, and sniffed. "You've got to bear up, girl," said Ulgerd, tipping down onto the bench beside her. "Your papa knows best. I know it seems hard now, but someday, when you're older, all this will seem like years ago."

"I'll never forget Fundin!" said Syrfrid. "I'll love him always. If I can't marry him, I'll waste away and die of grief. Or throw myself into the sea. I haven't made up my mind yet."

"Girl, girl. I remember when I was fourteen like you —"

"I'm nineteen, Mother."

"Nineteen? And not married yet?"

"I want to marry, Mother. I want to marry Fundin Nyrsson."

Ulgerd sighed. "When I dreamed of your wedding day, I never thought of you with someone whose feet pointed backward."

"There are more important things in life than the way your feet point."

"There's his nose, too. It's half an ell long."

"Since when do we get to carp at the size of people's noses? Look at Papa's nose. Try not to look at Papa's nose. He's had it stepped on twice this year."

"Only when he was drinking, dear. Besides, it's more than feet and noses. Why couldn't you find a nice Norwegian boy?"

"Fundin is Norwegian."

"Yes, but he's not *human*. He's a troll. There's lots of nice human boys in the valley. Why don't you marry Snorri Borresson?"

"He's already married, Mother."

"Why don't you marry Ulf Haldorsson?"

"He's only seven years old, Mother."

"Why don't you marry Stig Rolfsson?"

"He's insane, Mother."

"Why don't you marry Vidkin Anlaugsson?"

"He's dead, Mother. . . ."

As they spoke, Buri Bjarkasson the Bull-strangler (not to be confused with Buri Bjarkasson the Sheep-thief, who does not come into this story), husband to Ulgerd and father to Syrfrid, was falling out of his box-bed to greet the new day with a nosebleed. He lurched out the door into the yard, hitting his head, as usual, on the lintel. Buri wasn't very tall, but neither was the lintel.

The sun shone fair on the valley and on his farm,

THE OLD WAYS ARE BEST

by Larry Walker

Illustrations by Stephen E. Fabian

gleaming on the green slopes of the mountains and softening the many bumps on the mound, just to the north, where his forefather Kolbjorn the Unreasonable lay buried. Buri licked his lips for a moment, thinking of the treasure said to rest with the old warlock, then he shook the thought from his head.

Birds sang. Butterflies flitted. Wildflowers blazed blue and yellow and purple. Buri put his hands over his eyes and damned them all in the voice of a walrus dying in a barrel.

He was built badger-wise, with red hair, a red spiky beard, and a big red nose with footmarks on it. Walking as if his skin had tightened, he lumbered out the gate and down the muddy bank to the river. He knelt and dunked his head. Water spouted and the surface foamed. Dead fish rolled up. At last he pulled his head out, shook it, and stood.

He noted grudgingly that the farm work was going on as it should. Several of his children and thralls were up in the summer pasture with the stock, but here in the yard a thrall-woman was butchering a goose, two of his younger sons were trading punches absentmindedly, and his daughter Syrfrid was coming out of the kitchen-house with a pan of hog skull and skin for the geese.

From within he could hear his wife saying, "Why don't you marry Odvin Ketilsson?"

"He's an outlaw, Mother."

"Why don't you marry Arnvid Burisson?"

"He's my brother, Mother."

"That's right, I was forgetting. Well, why don't you marry —"

"WHERE'S YOUR MOTHER?" Buri bellowed.

"IN THE KITCHEN!" Syrfrid bellowed back.

"WELL TELL HER I WANT MY BREAKFAST!"

Buri knew where his wife was, of course, and Ulgerd could hear him (as could the entire valley). But Buri and Ulgerd had not spoken straight on for eighteen years. Neither remembered why. But the sham kept their sixteen children (there are things you can do without talking) running useless errands for hours each day, preventing mischief and encouraging them to leave home young, which Buri liked, so long as they didn't run off with trolls.

Syrfrid turned back to the kitchen-house.

"And don't look at me like a heartsick halibut!" Buri yelled at her back.

"That's a line girl," said a voice like local thunder from across the river. "I can understand his feelings."

"Yes, but is it fair to the children?" said another voice like it.

"Quiet now. Let me talk," said the first.

Buri had never heard such bottom-feeding voices before. He turned to see, on the bank across, a big, bulky, two-headed troll. There was a blond on Buri's right, and a redhead on his left. The two heads were talking, cheek to cheek. He could feel their talk in his footsoles.

He yelled, "Who are you and be off with you," dropping his own voice a few steps.

The troll leaned on a carven club. "We are Haur Thekksson," rumbled the blond head. "I am Gull-Haur, and this is my brother Rauth-Haur. We come in friendship and claim the right of hospitality."

"Don't talk hospitality to me!" said Buri, puffing a bit. "You're kin of Fundin Nyrsson! He came after my daughter a week since, and I packed him off like a kicked herring. I told him humans arrange these matters decently, through their families. The old ways are best."

"Couldn't agree more," put in Rauth-Haur. "Our tradition is just to carry the girl off. But Fundin won't listen — says he wants to do it your way, to please her. You can't tell young folks anything these days."

Buri had trouble working out whether to agree or not, it being pretty early in the morning yet, so he said, "Well, be that as may be, I don't want a troll at the table, and your kinsman knows it."

"You made that clear," said Gull-Haur. "You threw him over the hog wallow."

"Glad to do the same for you." Buri cracked his knuckles and tried to breathe from his belly.

"No talking to him," said Rauth-Haur. "We'll have to do it the traditional way. Hold him underwater until he turns blue."

Gull-Haur shook his head, and Rauth-Haur sneezed. "What's wrong with Fundin?" the Troll asked. "He's our sister's son, and a promising lad. He's about your size, and he has only one head, which you humans seem to prefer. He can understand the speech of stoats, and he knows a spell for curdling milk. Think of it as not losing a daughter, but gaining a cheese-maker."

Buri snorted. "I'll be hung up like a salmon and smoked before I'll wed my daughter to somebody who sits under bridges to pick fights with billy goats and who turns to stone at daybreak!"

"We fight other animals, too," said Rauth-Haur stoutly.

"And only wicked trolls turn to stone," said Gull-Haur.

"I don't care if you turn into codfish pudding! Your nephew isn't getting my little girl. So you can just toddle home and devise smithwork of cunning craftsmanship, or whatever it is you do." He turned back to the house. This rumbling was making him thirsty.

Gull-Haur said, "It's a pity. I thought we could talk about Kolbjorn's Mound."

Buri stopped and turned around.

"What do you know of Kolbjorn's Mound?" he asked, forgetting to drop his voice.

Gull-Haur turned his head to look at the mound, while Rauth-Haur looked at the ground and smirked.

"I know you've done some digging there," said Gull-Haur.

"Some digging! My boys and I wore our hands baitraw spading up that cursed heap! But it's useless! There's a bewitchment — when you take a spadeful out, you find two more where it came from! After a while you're standing on a little mound of your own. The whole place is goitered with them!"

"Kolbjorn always loved to send folks the long way round. A proper, traditional warlock he was," said Rauth-Haur.

"You knew Kolbjorn? He's been dead these two hundred years!"

"We are better than four hundred years old," said Gull-Haur. "You learn the odd secret in so much time. Ah, the stories we could tell! A pity we can't stay." The troll turned.

"WAIT!" cried Buri, lumbering down the bank. "Maybe I spoke overhastily. We could find you a place to sleep for, say, one night, I'm sure, and we could discuss matters — talk things over, you know. You're too big for the guest bed, and it's full of salt fish just now, anyway, but you could sleep on a bench —"

The troll turned back. "I'm not sure we care to stay," Gull-Haur sniffed. "Maybe it's best all around that we just go our way."

"Yes," said Rauth-Haur. "The farm has a lice-ridden look."

"LICE-RIDDEN!" shouted Buri. The mountains echoed: *ridden!*

"Fundin's probably better off without the girl. Silly, and untraditional, to wed a human."

Buri was chewing on his beard, but he snarled, "All right! I'm asking you please!"

Gull-Haur smiled. "Don't lose your head. You haven't one to spare. And don't worry where we'll sleep — no sleep tonight. Not if you want to enter the mound."

"Enter the mound tonight?"

"This is Midsummer Night, the one night of all the year it can be done. If you know how to summon Kolbjorn."

"Summon him?" Buri went pale. His face, with its rich nose, looked like a bowl of milk with an apple in it.

Gull-Haur squinted at him. "Ghosts don't scare you, do they?"

"Me? NO, no." No."

"Good. Of course we must understand each other. You do agree that if we get you in, and if you get Kolbjorn's treasure, Fundin and Syrfrid can wed?"

Buri scowled and scratched his head. "Yes, all right. Yes. I agree."

Haur sloshed across the river. Rauth-Haur whispered, "If I had the body-rule, we'd hold him underwater till he turned blue. Or change him into a hedgehog. Of course we'd need a black-tailed goose and a white catskin for that . . ."

"You be good," Gull-Haur whispered back.

"Oh, don't mind me. Just pretend I'm not here."

At the east end of Kolbjorn's great, boat-shaped mound, Haur and Buri sat, side by side. Though the hour was late, the sky shone silver-blue, except for the flame-glory in the west that washed the near side of every tree trunk in orange. The moon rode high and round as a shield, shedding yet more light on the shortest "light night" of the year. Farther north, there'd be no night at all.

Here and there in the valley, bonfires burned as the farmers kept Midsummer Night vigil for their dead. They could question those sad visitors, but woe to anyone who told what he'd learned from them.

Crickets sang and sang and sang and sang.

The troll seemed to be digging in the earth with their knife, talking to themselves. Buri drew a flask from his shirt and took a long pull from it. He was wondering if eating a lot of whale meat might not bring his voice down.

"You think it's time yet?" Rauth-Haur asked

Gull-Haur.

"Hard to say. What do you think?"

"Oh, you know me. I'm hopeless at judging time."

"I'm asking what you think."

"I've no idea. Really."

"All right, I think it's time."

"I would have said wait a few minutes. But have it your way."

Gull-Haur growled, and the troll rose like a thunder-head, looming up until it seemed they could pluck the moon away and leave the sky unwarded.

Rauth-Haur said, "Buri Bjarkasson, behold and be silent. You are about to witness the traditional Troll Grave-Opening Rite. Take your knife and cut a piece of turf."

"I've told you, digging's no use," said Buri. "You only end up with one of these fool lumps underfoot. Look — there's three or four right here."

"I said cut a turf, not dig, half-wit. It's the turf we want, not a hole."

Buri grumbled but set to work cutting a piece of sod out. He left a little grassy lump behind. "What now?" he asked.

"We put them on our heads," said Rauth-Haur. They ripped their turf in two and placed half on each head.

"I've never been keen on calling up the dead," Buri grumbled.

"This is Kolbjorn's house," said Gull-Haur. "If you want to enter, you must hail him."

"They say that the ghosts in southern lands go without their bodies."

"Everybody takes the easy way in southern lands," said Rauth-Haur.

Buri slapped his turf on his head. He shivered in spite of the mild breeze.

The troll spread their arms wide, edged with sunset-red, and Gull-Haur began to sing, so high and sweet that Buri looked at him twice. His melody floated somewhere over their heads, in a place above the trees but under the moon.

Rauth-Haur's voice marched below, round and grave, picking a patient rhythm that Buri couldn't quite catch. Nor could he catch the words.

"WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT ARE YOU TO ME?"

Buri all but broke his neck turning to the voice. In a doorway behind them, where no doorway had been, deep in shadow, a cloaked form stood, helmeted, with sword in hand.

Buri opened his mouth and forgot to close it.

Gull-Haur said, "We are Haur Thekksson, known to you of old. The little fellow with drool in his beard is Buri Bjarkasson the Bull-strangler, not to be confused with Buri Bjarkasson the Sheep-thief, a son of your sons in the tenth generation."

"Kin, eh?" Kolbjorn made an odd head movement. Buri could not make out his features. "And you come to visit me after all these years? As I recall, living men mostly do their best to stay out of graves."

"Much can be learned from the dead," said Gull-Haur.

"Truly. Much can be gained as well, from grave-goods.

But why should I bicker? I get so little company, and the years are long. There are rules in my house, of course. You may question me, but only when I've questioned you. Three riddles — what could be more fair?"

Rauth-Haur whispered, "You'll be at home here, Buri. Kolbjorn's hospitality matches yours."

"Answer me true," said Kolbjorn, "and I'll tell you what you wish to know. The truth is dear to me." He turned and went in at the door. "Wipe your feet. And take those stupid turves off your heads."

Haur picked up their club and pushed Buri inside. At the end of a downward-sloping shaft they entered a long hall, raftered and pillared. The only light was at the center, where the hearth should be, but it was not fire. It was a bluish glow, and it brightened as they stepped in.

What it lit set Buri coughing. The dreams of his greedy nights had not come near. The hall blazed with stacked and crowded and piled and spilled treasure. Gold and silver in coins and bracelets and rings and brooches. Swords and spears and axes, silver-chased and gold-inlaid. Armor for men and harness for horses, rich with smith-work. Drinking horns and bowls and kettles and buckets, all glowing in soft metal, all full of coins and spirals of hack-silver.

Buri turned to old Kolbjorn, almost the only dark thing, with Haur and himself, in the hall. Kolbjorn's back was turned, and his cloak, once rich, could be seen for a ragged ruin. A rusty mail shirt showed through its rents. White hair hung lank from under his silver helmet. But the sword in his right hand gleamed. His shadow loomed high on the wall, bent backward under the roof.

He whirled to face them, and the sight knocked Buri off his feet.



Kolbjorn's face was bone, the skin tight-wrapped like an old saddle. He grinned at that unspeakable joke only the dead know, and his eyes glowed like hot cheeses.

"You're kin of mine, you say!"

"S-son of your sons," Buri stammered, on his knees, "Out of — out of Ingvald, your second eldest."

"Most worthless of the lot, except for Thorvald and Vidar. And perhaps Augvald. But they were all worthless in their own ways.

"Thought they knew better than I, they did. Wanted farms of their own — ships of their own. Only the cost would be mine.

"I ask you, why should I have given them my gold? Did my father give me my own farm, my own ship? Not likely! Greedy old worm!

"Come now, son of my sons, I'll riddle you and you'll answer me. Answer right, and I promise I'll tell you what you want to know — yes, I'll tell you how to carry off my treasure! You think I don't know why you're here?

"Are you ready?"

"Y-yes." Shaking, Buri got to his feet.

"You understand, of course, that if you answer wrong, I get to take your head?"

Buri's mouth fell open. He looked at Kolbjorn's naked sword, bright in the witch-light.

He thought he did not want to die in a hole full of magic, with a dead man and a troll.

Kolbjorn laughed, a sound like an auger at work. "How thin the blood flows at the last!" he cried. "In my day we'd have never had to *think* whether to wager our heads! There's little of me left in you, Buri Bjarkasson! This troll is more man!"

Buri turned red. "Ask on then, old carcass!" he yelled. "I'll not be baited by carrion!"

The auger-laugh turned again. "Well spoken! Let's begin!

"First riddle: How can a man tell if his children are lying to him?"

Buri snorted. "That's easy. A man's children are always lying to him."

Kolbjorn made a scraping sound in his chest. "All right," he said, "that's one on your side. You must have children of your own." He stepped closer and whirled his sword above his head in a blue ring. Buri took a step back.

"Next riddle!" said Kolbjorn. "This one is harder. Why did the gods make babies small and weak?"

Buri thought a moment, but he knew he had the drift.

"I'd guess," he said, "that it was to give fathers the chance to drown them like wolf cubs before they grew dangerous!"

Kolbjorn spun away and stood for a moment, shivering, holding his sword straight up before him. His mail shirt rattled. Buri shivered too, and his hand stole toward his belt-knife.

"My oldest son defied me," Kolbjorn said. "In my own hall, with a belly full of my meat! Said it was folly to build this mound while I lived, said the cost was eating up the property. *My* property! Called me a liar! Me!"

"I could have killed him!"

"I should have killed him!"

"Come to think of it, I *did* kill him!"

He whirled to face Buri. "You think you're clever, don't you? You think you've figured the old man out, think you can laugh behind his back while you rob him? Answer me this then —

"If a man promises to spare the life of the son of his sons, and if he promises to tell him what he wants to know, is there any reason why he should *keep* that promise — bearing in mind that the sons' son is a bloodsucker and a sneaking thief?"

Looking in Kolbjorn's eyes, Buri did not know how to answer. If he said yes, the old snake would say no, but if he said no. . . .

"Come on, come on! You're a clever one! You young folks know all the answers! You'll howl like babies if you think you've been cheated, but let me turn my back and you'll slip a knife in it, not so?" The skull-face was a hole in the blue light, and at the bottom of the hole two yellow eyes burned. "Answer yes or no!"

Buri opened his mouth and shut it. He swallowed, coughed and said, "Yes. I think, yes, he must keep his promise."

"WRONG!" came the shout. The bright sword whistled, and Buri ducked and rolled, jarring up against a sea chest, dead-heavy with gold.

In the sliver of time it took, Buri had space to watch the arc of the sword as it swung down on him. He thought he heard a voice somewhere shouting, "The pillars! The pillars!" but it made no sense and was far, far off in any case.

The sword stopped in midarc, stayed by a swing of Haur Theksson's club.

Buri scuttled off, beetle-wise.

With a shout the dead man pushed Haur away, and the troll flew backward onto a carved bucket, which fell in pieces. The club skidded away.

"The pillars! The pillars!" Rauth-Haur gasped.

"What are you gibbering about?" said Gull-Haur, shaking his head.

"No time!"

Kolbjorn was over them now, sword raised, shouting, "Which head first?"

Rauth-Haur cried, "Buri, you ingrate, where are you?"

The question stopped Kolbjorn, who began to peer around the hall. "Yes, where is the ungrateful puppy? They were all ungrateful, all of them!"

He spotted Buri at the chamber end, frantically searching for the door, which was no longer there. He set out after him, harness ringing.

Haur scrambled up and retrieved the club.

"Strike the pillars!" said Rauth-Haur. "You've got the body-rule — I can't do it!"

"But why?" Gull-Haur yelled back. Kolbjorn was nearing Buri, who cowered, his back to the wall.

"Because of the little bumps!"

"The bumps! Of course!" said Gull-Haur. The troll ran to the nearest pillar and swung the club at it.

Kolbjorn raised his sword.

The club shattered the pillar.

WHOOSH!

The pillar vanished, with its rafters and a piece of the roof. Crimson light poured in. A rush of gold flew upward and out, like swallows.

Kolbjorn turned, shrieking, "NO!"

The troll ran to another pillar. "It's a contrary spell!" said Rauth-Haur. "So the pillars aren't holding the roof up — they're holding it down!"

CRACK!

WHOOSH!

As they smashed the next pillar, Kolbjorn was upon them, and being part of the mound himself, he went flying upward with his grave-goods, screaming towards the moon.

"UNGRATEFUL!"

The sun shone bright as Buri and Haur limped back toward the farmyard, cradling in their arms shirt fronts stuffed near ripping.

"I can't say you've much to boast of in your ancestors," Rauth-Haur observed.

Buri only grunted.

"You'll notice the sun is shining again, and we still haven't turned to stone."

Buri croaked, "Should that make me like you better?" He was still trying to match their voices, which left him hoarse, and he felt sore all over from the fight, like a mackerel ridden hard.

"Well, like us or not, you'll have to get used to us," said Gull-Haur.

Buri stopped and squinted up at them. "Why's that?"

"We'll be in-laws."

"How do you figure?"

"Your daughter marries our nephew. That makes us in-laws. Think about it — I'm sure you can work it out."

"And stop talking like a frog," said Rauth-Haur.

Buri said, "What makes you think anybody's marrying any body?"

"Come, come, Buri," said Gull-Haur. "You promised that if we got you into the mound, you'd let the young folks wed."

"I said they could wed if you got me in and I got the treasure. You *lost* me the treasure, flat-fish!"

Gull-Haur sputtered, and Rauth-Haur cried, "Why you little red louse-nit! What's that in your shirt then?"

Buri glanced down at the load above his belt, which had him walking bent over.

"Gleanings! Crumbs from the table! The real treasure is scattered over the valley! I'll have to go out with my sons and thralls to pick up what we can, and they'll try to pinch some of it, and I'll have to fight my neighbors for what they pick up, and where's my profit? There may even be a feud before all's done. I've little to show for this night's work."

"You've your life to show!" Rauth-Haur stormed. The household, rubbing sleepy eyes, was drifting out of the gate now to see what was the matter. Buri and Haur did not mark them. "Who saved your life when Kolbjorn was set to slice your fat head off? And who got near killed themselves while you were scrambling for a weasel hole?"

"Why should I help you? You got me into the thing! The way I figure it, you wanted me dead, so you could set

up the marriage with my half-wit next of kin!"

"An excellent idea!" roared Rauth-Haur.

"Besides," said Buri, "a tradition-monger like you should know the oldest tradition of all!"

"And what's that?"

"Any bargain with trolls can be wiggled out of! It's in all the stories!" Buri loosed his belt and spilled his loot on the ground, then leaped up onto Haur's chest, pummeling at both faces with a fat fist.

The troll let go another stream of gold and grabbed Buri by the scruff of the neck, straining to prize him off. But Buri stuck like a third head, punching hard and often.

They were soon ringed by watchers, in a half-circle on the uphill side. There was the thrall-woman, and Ulgerd, and several sons and daughters including Syrfrid, who was holding the hand of a fine-looking fellow with a nose half an ell long and feet that pointed backward.

Fundin Nyrsson was thinking, as he watched the two grapple, that Buri looked just like a swollen tick on his uncle's necks. He didn't speak his thought. He had a feeling that, marrying into this family, tongue-holding would be a useful skill.

Roaring in anger and pain, Haur lurched down toward

the river. They sloshed in, found a deep spot, and bent over, ducking Buri.

"THE OLD WAYS ARE BEST!" bellowed Rauth-Haur.

Buri, too strong to be unclamped, was not strong enough to get free. He thrashed and kicked while Ruth-Haur, roaring, and Gull-Haur, clenching his teeth, held him under.

Many fish died.

Buri's struggles weakened at last, and the troll let him up just enough to uncover his face.

"He's blue," said Gull-Haur.

Rauth-Haur shook his head. "Not blue enough."

They dunked him again.

When they pulled him up a second time, Gull-Haur asked, "Well, what do you say now?"

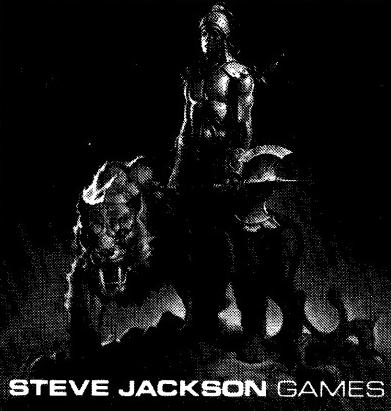
Buri sputtered, "Let them marry, curse you!"

"Well spoken, kinsman!" cried Rauth-Haur, spitting two teeth out. They tossed Buri onto the bank and climbed up to Syrfrid and Fundin. Picking the girl up off her feet, the troll kissed her on both cheeks at once.

Ulgerd, standing a little off, wiped a tear away. "I think traditional betrothals are just beautiful," she sniffed. Ω

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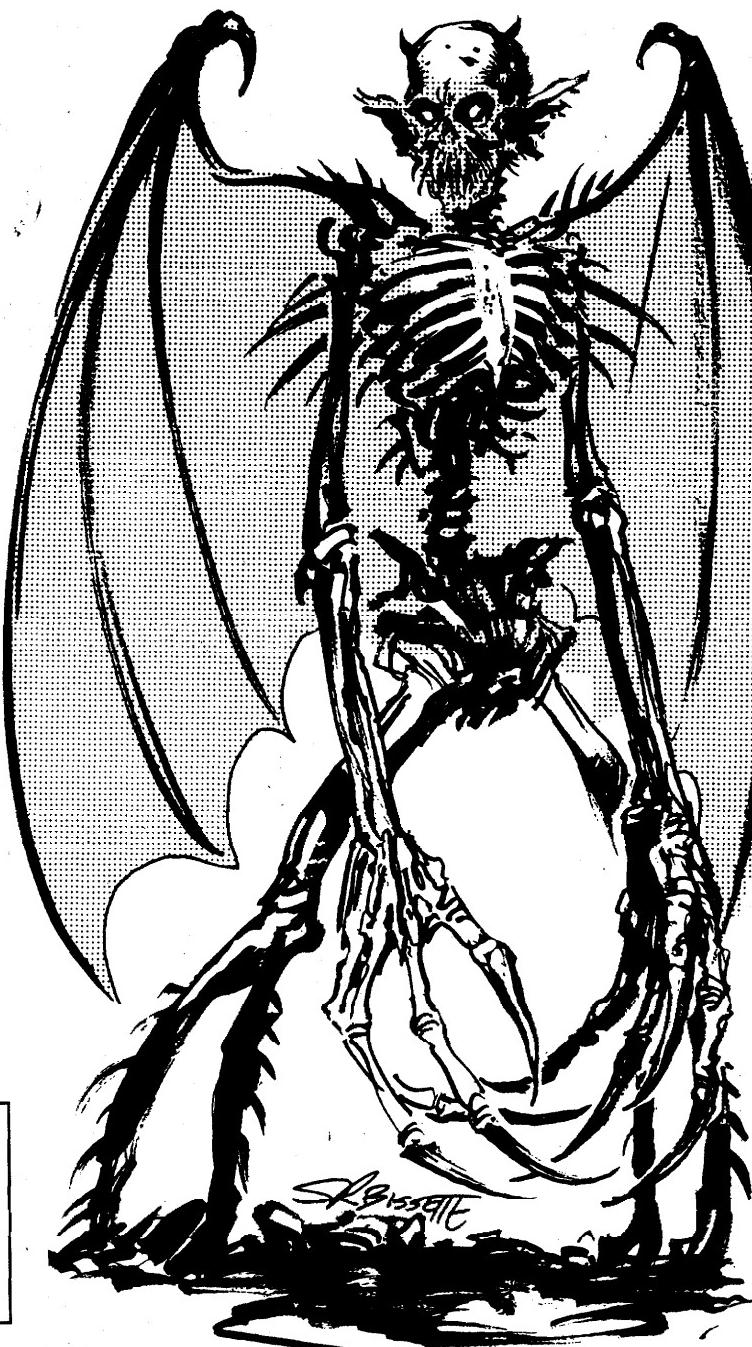
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**DISCOVER THE MAGIC
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“Pyramid power” and leadership in the AD&D® game

by Bryan Caplan

In the *Monster Manuals*, the FIEND FOLIO® Tome, and *Oriental Adventures*, demi-human clans and human villages receive certain above-average level characters, depending upon the number of demihumans or humans present. For example, on page 39 of the *Monster Manual*, it is stated that for every 20 (male) elves, there is one with above-average fighting ability: a 2nd- or 3rd-level fighter in this case. This seems to work in theory; in practice, however, something is slightly amiss.

The main problem is that not all multi-class options are covered in the previously mentioned game books. The whole system seems arbitrary, ignoring certain classes, class combinations, and levels. But logic dictates that there are more low-level types than high-level types, though certain levels are often missing while higher ones are found in every community.

These problems alone weren’t important enough to justify the effort it would take to work out an entirely new leadership system, completely rehashing the old. But then, *Unearthed Arcana* came along, creating even more problems! New classes are now open to each race; more races and sub-races have appeared. It now seems reasonable to fix both systems at once.

Fortunately, the new Oriental races and classes also fit neatly into the revised system presented here.

Every race that establishes its own communities is covered herein. There are dwarves (gray, hill, and mountain), elves (dark, gray, high, valley, wood, and wild), gnomes (deep and surface), halflings (several sorts), three basic types of humans (barbarians, Western or Occidental, and Oriental), and korobokuru. Some races are not included (the half-elves, half-orcs, hengeyokai, and spirit folk), because they generally exist in the societies of other peoples, rather than creating their own societies.

Once a community’s inhabitants are known, it’s easier to find needed NPCs, plan invasions using the BATTLESYSTEM™ supplement, or run urban adventures. Of course, government, politics, and other details should also be included, but these campaign elements are up to the DM. The purpose of this system is merely to determine the leaders of any group of any particular race.

The figures below are guidelines only, meant for typical groups of humans and demi-human races — not every single one. It is very possible that a group of five 1-HD dwarves would be led by a 6th-level dwarven cleric and no one else, or that three dwarves may be encountered who are 6th-

level, 5th-level, and 4th-level fighters, respectively. The system described below merely gives general guidelines for average groups, not universal guidelines for every group.

Interpreting the tables

Each of the major variations of the PC races receives a table herein, listing the exceptional NPC leaders gained because of group size. There are a couple of things that should be explained about these tables, however.

All exceptional characters are in addition to a group’s total number. For example, a group with 10 1-HD dwarves gains two 2nd-level fighters and one 3rd-level fighter, plus one 1st-level cleric and one 1st-level thief. This does *not* mean that three of the 10 1-HD dwarves “become” higher-level fighters, one of the dwarves becomes a cleric, or another becomes a thief; it merely means that there are additional, leader-type dwarves. Furthermore, these additional leaders do not add more leaders. In other words, the above group would not suddenly be counted as a group of 15 dwarves after its leaders were assigned. Instead, the group receives the leaders appropriate for a group of 10 1-HD male dwarves, and that is the end of it. Otherwise, the problems could go on forever, with each addition of leaders prompting more leaders, and so on.

While exceptional persons can come from either sex, only the total number of males is used to determine numbers and types of leaders. Otherwise, there would be twice the number of leaders that should actually be present in a group.

These “pyramid tables” are built upon the typical member of a certain race; for humans and halflings, the average person is zero-level. All of the other races, however, have 1-HD (optionally, 1st-level fighter) individuals as the average community member. Halflings and humans are indicated by the *Dungeon Masters Guide* to be the only races with zero-level beings. DMs may wish to turn 1-HD demi-

Table 1
Dwarves
(gray, hill, and mountain)

| Size of group | Special characters |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 5 | F2 |
| 10 | F3, C1, T1 |
| 20 | F4, C2, CF1, CT1, FT1 |
| 50 | F5, C3, CF2, CT2, FT2 |
| 100 | F6, C4, CF3, CT3, FT3 |
| 200 | F7, C5, CF4, CT4, FT4 |
| 500 | F8, C6, CF5, CT5, FT5 |
| 1,000 | F9, C7, CF6, CT6, FT6 |

Note: In any group of gray dwarves, 20% of all thieves are actually assassins.

Table 2
Elves (dark, gray, high, valley, and wood)

| Size of group | Special characters |
|---------------|---|
| 5 | F2, C1, Mu1, T1 |
| 10 | F3, C2, Mu2, T2, CF1, CMu1, CT1, FMu1, FT1, MuT1 |
| 20 | F4, C3, Mu3, T3, CF2, CMu2, CT2, FMu2, FT2, MuT2, CFMu1, CFT1, CMuT1, FMuT1 |
| 50 | F5, C4, Mu4, T4, CF3, CMu3, CT3, FMu3, FT3, MuT3, CFMu2, CFT2, CMuT2, FMuT2 |
| 100 | F6, C5, Mu5, T5, CF4, CMu4, CT4, FMu4, FT4, MuT4, CFMu3, CFT3, CMuT3, FMuT3 |
| 200 | F7, C6, Mu6, T6, CF5, CMu5, CT5, FMu5, FT5, MuT5, CFMu4, CFT4, CMuT4, FMuT4 |
| 500 | FB, C7, Mu7, T7, CF6, CMu6, CT6, FMu6, FT6, MuT6, CFMu5, CFT5, CMuT5, FMuT5 |
| 1,000 | F9, CB, Mu8, TB, CF7, CMu7, CT7, FMu7, FT7, MuT7, CFMu6, CFTG, CMuT6, FMuT6 |

Notes:

Dark elves: Among drow, 20% of all thieves are actually assassins.

Gray and high elves: Every fighter or multiclassed fighter, regardless of level, has a 25% chance of being a ranger. Also, 25% of all clerics and multiclassed clerics are actually druids. For every fighter, there is a 10% chance that an additional cavalier of equal level exists. If this chance exceeds 100%, there is automatically one cavalier of equal level, plus the possibility for additional ones if the percentage is greater than 100. This process continues indefinitely. For example, a community with 19 3rd-level fighters would have at least one 3rd-level cavalier and a 90% chance of having a second one.

Valley elves: 25% of clerics are druids, and 25% of fighters are actually rangers.

Wood elves: 50% of the fighters are actually rangers, and 50% of the clerics are actually druids.

Table 3
Wild Elves

| Size of group | Special characters |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 5 | F2 |
| 10 | F3, D1, T1 |
| 20 | F4, D2, DF1, DT1, FT1 |
| 50 | F5, D3, DF2, DT2, FT2 |
| 100 | F6, D4, DF3, DT3, FT3 |
| 200 | F7, D5, DF4, DT4, FT4 |
| 500 | F8, D6, DF5, DT5, FT5 |
| 1,000 | F9, D7, DF6, DT6, FT6 |

Table 4
Gnomes (deep and surface)

| Size of group | Special characters |
|---------------|--|
| 5 | F2, Cl, I1, T1 |
| 10 | F3, C2, I2, T2, CF1, CI1, CT1, FI1, FT1, IT1 |
| 20 | F3, C3, I3, T3, CF2, CI2, CT2, FI2, FT2, IT2 |
| 50 | F5, C4, I4, T4, CF3, CI3, CT3, FI3, FT3, IT3 |
| 100 | F6, C5, I5, T5, CF4, CI4, CT4, FT4, FT4, IT4 |
| 200 | F7, C6, I6, T6, CF5, CI5, CT5, FI5, FT5, IT5 |
| 500 | F8, C7, I7, T7, CF6, CI6, CT6, FI6, FT6, IT6 |
| 1,000 | F9, C8, I8, T8, CF7, CI7, CT7, FI7, FT7, IT7 |

Table 5
Halflings (hairfeet, stouts, tallfellows, and mixed)

| Size of group | Special characters |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| 5 | Fl, T1 |
| 10 | F2, T2, C1, FT1 |
| 20 | F3, T3, C2, FT2, CF1, CT1 |
| 50 | F4, T4, C3, FT3, CF2, CT2 |
| 100 | F5, T5, C4, FT4, CF3, CT3 |
| 200 | F6, T6, C5, FT5, CF4, CT4 |
| 500 | F7, T7, C6, FT6, CF5, CT5 |
| 1,000 | F8, T8, C7, FT7, CF6, CT6 |

Note: 25% of all halfling clerics are actually druids, if the community's alignment allows.

humans into 1st-level fighters to avoid the question of where the 1st-level fighters are in a society; otherwise, one may assume that NPC demi-humans are able to go directly from 1-HD status to 2nd level.

When the leaders of any racial community are being figured, first round off the number considered to the nearest five (five is the base factor of the tables). Depending upon the race being considered,

various higher-level types are thus acquired. For example, a dwarven group receives a 2nd-level fighter for every five 1-HD adult males. Therefore, a group of 63 dwarves (rounded to 65) receives 13 such leaders. Next, round to the nearest 10, which in the case of the example above, is 60. Therefore, six sets of leaders are found for every 10 1st-level dwarves. In the case of dwarves, every 10 1-HD

Table 6
Barbarian Humans (Occidental or Oriental)

| Size of group | Special characters |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 5 | B2 |
| 10 | B3 |
| 20 | B4, C1* |
| 50 | B5, C2* |
| 100 | B6, C3* |
| 200 | B7, C4* |
| 500 | B8, C5* |
| 1,000 | B9, C6* |

* May be shaman, witch doctor, or special barbarian cleric from *Unearthed Arcana* and DRAGON® issue #109, page 14. Only one kind of "priest" is usually accepted by the tribe, but this varies according to the tribe's makeup.

male fighter dwarves means that a 3rd-level fighter, a 1st-level cleric, and a 1st-level thief are also acquired. Next, round to the nearest 20; in the case of this example, there are 60. Every 20 dwarves means that a 4th-level fighter, a 2nd-level cleric, a 2nd-level thief, a 1st-level cleric/fighter, a 1st-level cleric/thief, and a 1st-level fighter/thief are received. The group of dwarves described above receives three sets of this last group of leaders mentioned.

This system of rounding continues, going from 5 to 10 to 20 to 50 to 100 to 200 to 500, and finally to 1,000. When a group receives but a single set of leaders, then no more leaders are received. Still using the example of 63 dwarves above, the group would cease to receive additional leaders after it received one set of the exceptional dwarves awarded for every 50 1-HD dwarves. A group of 246 dwarves, on the other hand, would receive 49 sets of leaders given for every five dwarves, 25 sets of leaders given to a group for every 10 dwarves, 12 sets of leaders given for every 20 dwarves, five sets for every 50, two for every 100, and one set given for every 200. Fortunately, most of these calculations can be done mentally in a matter of seconds – even for very large groups.

The reason that cavaliers and rangers of drowish descent are not mentioned is that these classes do not fit into a dark-elven community. How could a cavalier living underground learn how to ride a horse? Furthermore, what would a good-aligned, nature-oriented class like the ranger be doing in an evil society that lives in rocky caverns? Logic dictates that these classes would not be found in any normal (evil) community of drow. Similarly, assassins are generally not found among groups of races which are basically good in alignment (such as hill and mountain dwarves, and all elves save for drow). The existence of thief-acrobats, because of their special nature, is best left up to the DM's own discretion.

Humans are typically zero-level types, but the specific make-up of their forces depends upon their cultural extraction and other factors. Certain cultures of humans in a campaign may not have certain classes; in such instances, these are best ignored. These types of humans do not refer to any particular *kind* of human, such as berserkers or merchants; they are simply the ordinary men found in villages and towns everywhere. Humans are widely variable in the subclasses that their groups contain. Like their Occidental kin, the specific make-up of Oriental forces depends upon their cultural extraction and other factors.

The alignment of these leader types will generally follow racial tendencies, or will come as close to it as allowed. Thus, thieves in a colony of lawful-good halflings may be neutral good, true neutral, or lawful neutral. The DM may decide if special cases exist or not, such as an evil

**Table 7
Occidental (Western) Humans**

| Size of group | Special characters |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 5 | F1 |
| 10 | F2, C1, T1 |
| 20 | F3, C2, T2, Mu1 |
| 50 | F4, C3, T3, Mu2 |
| 100 | F5, C4, T4, Mu3 |
| 200 | F6, C5, T5, Mu4 |
| 500 | F7, C6, T6, Mu5 |
| 1,000 | FB, C7, T7, Mu6 |

Notes:

There is a 10% chance of having a cavalier of equal level for every normal fighter;
10% of all cavaliers are actually paladins.

Among woodsmen and other nature-oriented humans, 20-50% of their fighters will be rangers, depending upon how strongly tied to nature the group is.

In most societies, 10% of these clerics are actually druids, but it may be as high as 100% or as low as 0% in certain cultures, the degree being dependent upon the general importance of nature to that particular people.

10% of all magic-users are actually illusionists.

20% of all thieves are actually assassins.

**Table 8
Oriental Humans**

| Size of group | Special characters |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 5 | Bu1 |
| 10 | Bu2 |
| 20 | Bu3, Sh1, Sol, Y1 |
| 50 | Bu4, Sh2, So2, Mo1, W1, Y2, N1 |
| 100 | Bu5, Sh3, So3, Mo2, W2, Y3, N2 |
| 200 | Bu6, Sh4, So4, Mo3, W3, Y4, N3 |
| 500 | Bu7, Sh5, So5, Mo4, W4, Y5, N4 |
| 1,000 | Bu8, Sh6, So6, Mo5, W5, Y6, N5 |

Notes:

For every bushi, there is a 10% chance of having an additional samurai of equal level.

For every bushi, there is a 5% chance of having an additional kensai of equal level.
A ninja will be a split-class bushi, sohei, wu jen, or yakuza.

**Table 9
Korobokuru**

| Size of group | Special characters |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 5 | BO2 |
| 10 | BO3 |
| 20 | BO4 |
| 50 | BO5, W1 |
| 100 | BO6, W2 |
| 200 | BO7, W3 |
| 500 | BO8, W4 |
| 1,000 | BO9, W5 |

halfling ruling a group of good ones.

The following abbreviations are used for the character classes: C = cleric, D = druid, Sh = shukenja, So = sohei, F = fighter, B = barbarian, BO = Oriental barbarian, Bu = bushi, Mo = monk, Mu = magic-user, I = illusionist, W = wu jen, T = thief, Y = yakuza, and N = ninja.

Multiclassed characters are noted by simply placing one class after the other; thus, a cleric/fighter is listed as "CF". The level is listed after the class.

Using these tables, the leaders for any typical group of a PC race may be determined. Interaction at all levels with the leader-types of any group is made possible, opening up another field of possibilities for players and DMs alike.

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Armored and Dangerous



*The power
of powered
armor in the
STAR FRONTIERS®
game*

by David Dennis

Powered armor is a device commonly used in science-fiction role-playing games and occasionally used in fantasy RPGs. TSR's own GAMMA WORLD® game has powered armor. A suit of powered armor also appears in AD&D® module S3 *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*. Unfortunately, the game that would most likely have powered armor lacks it. Spacesuit armor is found in the STAR FRONTIERS® Knight Hawks rulebook, but it is not powered. Here, then is real powered armor.

Properties of powered armor

Certain characteristics apply to any powered-armor suit, no matter what the design. The main property of such armor is the protection it provides. The degree of protection for each weapon type is listed on Table 3. The percentages listed there work on the same principal as spacesuit armor. If a character is hit by a weapon, look on the chart for the proper percentage and roll percentile dice. If the number is less than or equal to the listed percentage, the weapon fails to penetrate the armor. If the weapon penetrates the armor, the character still takes only half damage. Powerscreens may be combined with powered armor (using the SEU in the miscellaneous powerpack, if there is one), but defensive suits may not. Thus, a powerscreen that allows only half damage through (such as an inertia screen) means only one-fourth the total damage affects the character.

Besides providing protection, powered armor boosts the wearer's Strength and Stamina. A person wearing a fully functional suit of armor has triple his normal Stamina. This benefit comes from lack of

fatigue, lack of effort expended when wounded, decreased penetration by weapons, and many other factors. Even more benefits are received from the increased strength the armor gives. An armored character is able to lift one metric ton (1,000 kg) over his head, carry 200 kg at encumbered movement, and carry 120 kg encumbered. The suit's strength adds an additional 35 points to damage done in melee combat. For purposes of hitting in melee combat, such that half of the attacker's Strength is the chance to hit, give the wearer a base 100% chance to hit. Jumping is also boosted by the armor's strength, allowing jumps of 200 meters in height. Jet-assisted jumps may be made to 400 meters, but only 10 jet-assisted jumps may be made before the suit runs out of fuel. Horizontal jumps of 180 meters, with a 40-meter peak at the height of the arc, may also be made. Rate of movement in powered armor depends upon the type of armor purchased. All of the options listed for vehicles also apply to powered armor (with the exception of skid turns).

The key word in the phrase "powered armor" is "powered". These machines of destruction consume massive amounts of power. Powered armor suits are fuelled by type I parabatteries (600 Cr each) that last 48 hours each. If the suit runs out of power, the wearer is stuck with an incredibly cumbersome suit that leaves him almost helpless. Fortunately, every suit carries two spare parabatteries that may be exchanged for the used battery in 10 turns. In addition to the normal power supply, most suits have two separate powerpacks for weapons and miscellaneous devices such as screens, cameras, and infrared jammers. The amount of SEU in each of these varies from suit to suit. The weapons pack has connections for two weapons, and the miscellaneous pack has connections for one screen and two auxiliary items.

A soldier on a battlefield as dangerous as those of the STAR FRONTIERS game needs to be completely aware of his surroundings. Therefore, every suit of powered armor contains a compass, infrared goggles, magnigoggles, radiophone, tox-y-rad gauge, and an external microphone that dampens loud noises and amplifies quiet ones. This microphone also allows the wearer of the suit to communicate with creatures outside. Every suit also contains a vital-statistics monitor on the outside that measures the wearer's rate of respiration, pulse, brainwaves, and the locations of his wounds. (In game terms, characters will be able to tell the current Stamina of wounded soldiers.)

In case of a gas or radiation attack, every suit of powered armor contains a gas mask and a four-hour air supply (which means that powered armor is completely usable underwater or in space). The air supply may be renewed where there is clean air. Powered armor also contains a four-day supply of food for

one person (stored in a freeze-dried form). The solid supply of food is only to be used when the suit's main supply runs out. The main food supply consists of a constant intravenous flow of nutrients that allows the soldier to fight and be fully nourished without stopping to eat. This supply of food also lasts four days. Two doses of stimdose, two doses of biocort, and one dose of staydose make up the suit's medicinal supply. The suit automatically administers these drugs to the suit user when necessary. Note that the effect of the biocort is tripled because it is added to the wearer's original Stamina. Furthermore, if a character's armor breaks down in the wilderness, the suit contains a survival pack identical to that found in the *Crash on Volturnus* module included in the Alpha Dawn game set. As a final note, getting into a suit of armor takes four rounds (five for Vrusk).

Uses for powered armor

Powered armor is used by the UPF and certain rich and powerful megacorporations and planetary governments for planetary raids, antiarmor strikes, search-and-destroy missions, and various other activities across the Frontier. Soldiers in powered armor are usually landed by shuttles or dropped to a planet from orbit by assault transports: large, bulky ships equipped with ion engines, each capable of carrying 1,000 normal troops, or 700 powered troops and 10 shuttles. (Each shuttle carries 100 soldiers of either type.) Along with the shuttles, each transport carries numerous one-man reentry capsules for orbital drops by powered-armor troops. The Knight Hawks statistics for these ships are in Table 1.

Prior to an orbital drop, powered-armor soldiers are encased in individual capsules. A capsule consists of several layers, two of which contain parachutes and one which contains retrorockets. As the capsule enters the atmosphere, the layers burn away, protecting the soldier inside. With the combined use of the parachutes, retrorockets, and the powered armor's boot jets, the capsule is able to make a safe and gradual descent.

As the ablative layers of the capsule break off, they show up as numerous blips on radar, thus making it difficult to track descending capsules. To further this end, dummy capsules, exploding capsules, magnetic decoys, ion-window devices, white-noise broadcasters, and radar jammers are also launched from orbiting ships. Together, these elements produce thousands of images on radar when there are in actuality only a few hundred manned capsules being dropped. Consequently, the drop is probably the safest part of the mission. A 2% chance exists for any dropped soldier to become a casualty in the actual drop; casualties during the drop are almost invariably fatalities.

Powered-armor drop capsules are *not* for sale to the general public. They are

considered high-security military hardware, and possession of such a capsule or a drop-capable ship (or a suit of powered armor, for that matter) is a major felony.

Powered armor design

The system provided in this section allows you to custom-design a suit of powered armor. This system gives the designer 545 points with which to build a suit. The basic cost of a suit of powered armor is 3,500 Cr for a stripped-down version without weapons, sensors, or special movement capabilities. Prices for additional equipment may be added to this base price. The system for designing a suit is explained below:

Weapons: Weapons cost one point for every kilogram of weight they possess. For purposes of game balance, pistols weigh 3 kg and rifles 7 kg. A character may never have more than five pistols or three rifles per arm. In addition, a suit may never have more than 30 kg of weapons built into one arm. However, a character may still hold a handheld weapon in an arm with 30 kg. Handheld weapons must still be paid for in points. Total point cost for all weapons desired may never exceed 85 points. All costs for weapons purchased are added to the base cost.

Movement: When designing a powered suit, the turn speed, top speed, acceleration, and deceleration must be bought in points. Each of these is paid for using a number of points equal to that ability in meters/turn (thus, a turn speed of 90 meters/turn costs 90 points). Flight capability may also be bought, but a 190 meters/turn top speed on the ground and a minimum ground acceleration of 80 meters/turn are needed to qualify for the running take-off needed to fly. Flight costs an additional number of points equal to the top air speed in meters/turn divided by 10, rounded up. The monetary price for movement is 5 Cr per meters/turn in every ground ability and 10 Cr per meter/turn of top speed in flight. Flying suits accelerate, decelerate, change altitude, and make turns just like a jetcopter. However, flying suits may perform nap-of-the-earth flying with no movement penalties.

Power: The amount of SEU stored in the weapons and the miscellaneous powerpacks must be decided upon. Add up the total SEU carried in each powerpack and divide this number by 10, rounding up. This is the number of points that must be paid. The monetary cost is 5 Cr for every SEU carried. Powerpacks may be recharged at the same places as power backpacks (at no more than a 50-point expenditure).

Ammunition: Again, the listed weight in kilograms is taken in points. A dash on the Ammunition chart (in the Alpha Dawn Expanded Game Rules booklet, page 40) means that the item weighs 0.5 kg or less. For point costs, assume that these items weigh 0.5 kg each and therefore cost ½ point each.

Table 1
Assault Transport and Shuttle Statistics

| Ship type | HS | HP | ADF | MR | DCR | Weapons | Defenses |
|-------------------|----|----|-----|----|-----|-----------|-------------------|
| Shuttle | 3 | 15 | — | 4 | 29 | None | RH |
| Assault transport | 10 | 50 | 1 | 4 | 50 | LB,RB(x3) | RH, MS, ICM (x 4) |

Table 2
Standard UPF Assault Model Powered Armor

| Weapon system | Points | Cost (Cr) |
|---------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Basic suit | — | 35,000 |
| Two rocket launchers (right forearm) | 15(x2) | 5,000 (x 2) |
| One grenade mortar (back) | 15 | 2,000 |
| One flamethrower (left forearm) | 10 | 3,000 |
| Two missile packs (one each shoulder) | 20 | 1,200 (x 2) |
| Turn speed: 90 meters/turn | 90 | 450 |
| Top speed: 150 meters/turn | 150 | 750 |
| Acceleration: 70 meters/turn | 70 | 350 |
| Deceleration: 50 meters/turn | 50 | 250 |
| Weapons power: 300 SEU | 30 | 1,500 |
| Misc. power: 200 SEU | 20 | 1,000 |
| Flamethrower ammunition | 10 | 50 |
| Eight grenade mortar shells | 4 | 8 (x 8) |
| Nine rockets | 4 (x 9) | 15 (x 9) |
| One heavy laser (handheld) | 10 | 6,000 |
| Total | 545 | 62,949 |

Extras: If you wish to include special equipment such as more communications, radar, infrared jammers, cameras, holoscreens, and so forth, the point cost is up to the referee. A good ballpark estimate of cost may be made by dividing the cost in credits by 100, thus giving the point cost. Under this system, an infrared jammer would cost 5 points, a holoscreen would cost 10 points, and a subspace radio would cost 200 points.

An example of an armored suit is shown in Table 2 — the standard UPF Assault Model powered unit. The UPF armor is, naturally, highly efficient in its use of points, with no leftover or wasted points. The total listed cost in credits includes the base price.

Weapons for armor

Some weapons listed in Tables 2 through 6 are probably not familiar to you. These devices are weapons that are especially well-suited for use with powered armor. When designing armor, you may want to look at the weapons described in Alex Curylo's excellent article "Tanks a Lot!" from DRAGON® issue #99. The weapons described therein may be designed into powered armor. Here are the weapons that may be used:

ECM (electronic countermeasures) rifle: This weapon shoots a beam of magnetic energy. Its main function is to disrupt robots and computers, though it may

affect living beings by causing disorders in the iron content of the creature's blood and by jamming the creature's neural synapses. To find the chance of jamming a computer or robot, multiply the number of SEU used by five for a base percentage chance of success. From this base, subtract the level of the computer or robot multiplied by four; this will yield the chance of a malfunction. When a malfunction occurs, roll on the malfunctions table (page 15 in the Expanded Game Rules booklet) for the results. To cause damage to living targets, an expenditure of two SEU is necessary. When firing at vehicles or armor, treat the number of SEU used as the number of dice of damage done when using the damage table. Even if 15 SEU are fired at an armored soldier, the attack still does 5d10 to the wearer, but it is a 15-dice attack for the damage table.

Flamethrower: Originally mentioned in Alex Curylo's article, this weapon may also be used in a suit of powered armor. This device is hooked to a tank of napalm. The flamethrower's purpose is incendiary work, but it works well when used as an anti-personnel weapon.

Missile pack: Although guided missiles were mentioned in "Tanks a Lot," missile packs were not. Each missile pack contains six missiles. Missile packs come with a full supply of ammo when purchased. When fired, the wearer of the suit may command the missiles to divide themselves between as many targets as the number of

missiles launched. In addition, the suit wearer may dispatch different numbers of missiles to different targets. For example, a soldier in a suit with missile packs sees one civilian, one skimmer, and one enemy powered-armor soldier. The soldier launches eight missiles, aiming one at the civilian, three at the skimmer, and four at the enemy suit. All missiles must roll separately to hit, but receive a 30% bonus to hit because each missile is guided. As many missiles may be fired as are remaining in the suit, although all need not be fired. Missile packs may never be mounted in the arms or legs of a suit.

Armored combat

Combat in powered armor is conducted like normal ranged combat except for a few modifiers. Computerized targeting systems are built into every powered armor suit. As a result, characters wearing powered armor receive a 20% bonus to hit when using ranged weapons. If the character uses a missile pack, this bonus is also added to that given under the description.

If a weapon penetrates the armor during combat, there is a chance that damage to the suit occurs. The following sequence provides a step-by-step system for resolving this type of damage. Note that results derived from this are cumulative. Based on this premise, if speed is reduced by half twice in a row, the overall speed falls to one-quarter normal. As a final note, damage to powered armor may be repaired by technicians using the repair machinery subskill.

- Check if the weapon penetrated the armor. If so, additional suit damage may have occurred. (The nature of this damage will be checked later on Table 7.) Character damage also results. If not, no character damage results.

- Check if damage to the armor occurs. Subtract the number rolled from the number needed to hit for the difference. If the difference is equal to or greater than 35, then additional damage to the suit's functions has occurred.

- Add the number of dice of damage caused by the weapon to a 2d10 die roll.

- Divide the percentage of protection by 5, then multiply the quotient by 2. Subtract the product from the sum in step 3.

- Consult Table 7. Apply the results next turn.

- Roll for normal damage to the character, reducing the damage by half; reduce it by one-quarter if using a powerscreen effective against that weapon type.

For example: Jn'kri, a Vrusk, is hit by a

Table 3
Powered Armor Protection

| Weapon type | Degree of protection |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Lasers | 50% |
| Sonics | 60% |
| Electrorunner | 100% |
| Bullets | 70% |
| Needlers | 100% |
| Recoilless rifle | 40% |
| Gyrojet | 55% |
| Frag. grenade | 45% |
| Rocket launcher | 35% |
| Axe, knife, etc. | 100% |
| Electric sword | 65% |
| Spear or sword | 85% |
| Shock gloves | 70% |
| Stunstick | 85% |
| Guided missile | 30% |
| Flamethrower | 90% |
| Cannon | 30% |
| Howitzer | 15% |
| Bomb | 20% |
| Mine | 50% |
| ECM rifle | 45% |

Table 4
Special Weapons' Effects

| Weapon type | Damage | Ammo | SEU | Rate ** | Defense |
|----------------------|-------------|--------|------|---------|---------|
| ECM rifle | 5d10 or jam | Varies | 2-20 | 2 | Gauss |
| Flamethrower | 3d10* | 10 | — | 1 | None |
| Missile pack missile | 6d10 each | 6 | — | 1-6 | Inertia |

* Flamethrowers cause 1d10 of damage per turn to a target for three turns after firing, or until the flames are extinguished.

** A character in powered armor may fire all weapons he possesses in the same turn except those on the gun arm. Here, the wearer must choose between the hand-held weapon and the weapons built into that arm.

Table 5
Special Weapons' Ranges

| Weapon type | Range | | | |
|----------------------|-------|-------|--------|---------|
| | PB | Short | Medium | Long |
| ECM rifle | 0-10 | 11-30 | 31-100 | 101-150 |
| Flamethrower | 0-10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | 31-45 |
| Missile pack missile | 0-10 | 11-50 | 51-150 | 151-300 |
| | | | | 301-500 |

rocket launcher fired from an attacking ground transport. First, Jn'kri checks to see if the rocket has penetrated the armor. Jn'kri rolls a 49 and sees that the rocket has indeed penetrated the armor. Now, he checks to see if his suit sustains any further damage. The ground transport needed to roll a 60 to hit; it does so. The difference between 60 and 20 is greater

than 35 ($60 - 20 = 40$), so his suit might take additional damage. He now rolls 2d10 and comes up with a 17. To this, he adds 15 (because a rocket launcher does 15d10); the result is 32. He then divides the suit's resistance to rocket launchers (35%) by 5 and gets 7, then multiplies this by 2 to get 14. The result of this calculation is subtracted from 32 to get 18. Jn'kri checks a

result of 18 on Table 7 and sees that it means no further damage is taken by the suit, although damage to himself is taken.

Vrusk who are buying powered armor must add an additional 10% to the base price, resulting in a base price of 38,500 Cr. This increase is needed for the additional cost of more limbs, additional artificial muscles, strangely shaped gloves and

Table 6
Special Weapons' Statistics

| Weapon type | Cost (Cr) | Mass (kg) | Ammunition | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| | | | Type | Cost (Cr) | Mass (kg) | Rounds |
| ECM rifle | 8,000 | 15 | Pack | Varies | Varies | Varies |
| Flamethrower | 3,000 | 10 | Napalm | 50 | 10 | 10 |
| Missile pack | 1,200 | 10 | Missiles | 1,000 | 10 | 6 |

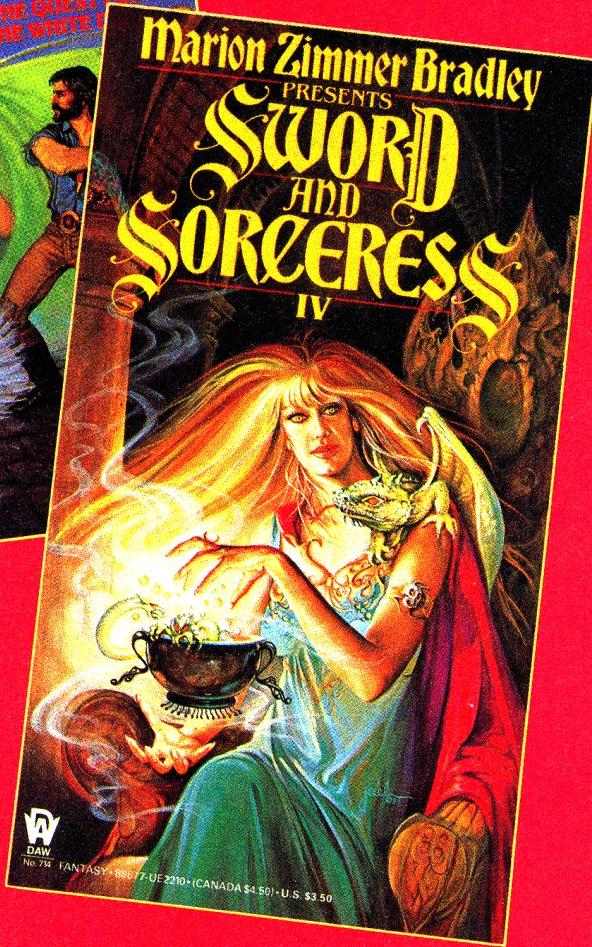
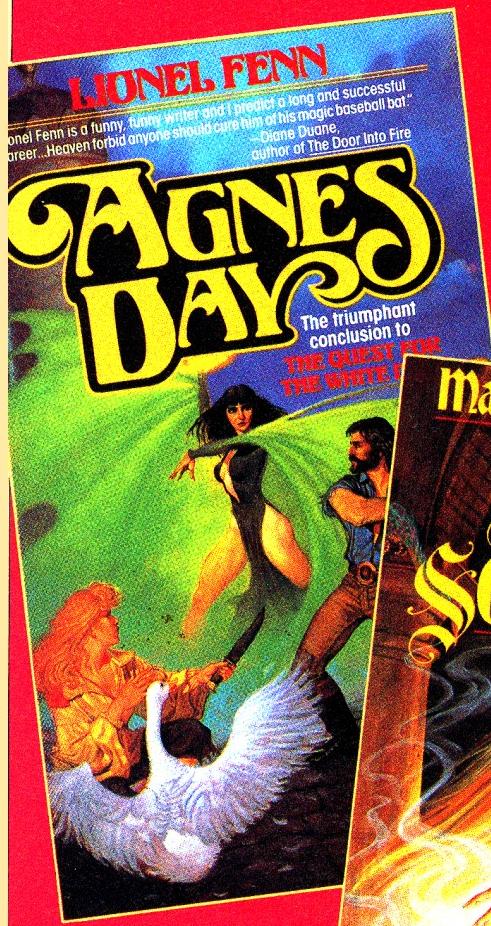
Table 7
Damage to Powered Armor

| Die roll plus damage | Effect |
|-------------------------|--|
| 2-19 | No effect |
| 20 | Turn speed -20 meters/turn |
| 21 | Acceleration -25 meters/turn |
| 22 | Top speed -35 meters/turn |
| 23 | Jumping length (horizontally) -20 meters |
| 24 | Jumping length (vertically) -35 meters |
| 25 | Boot jets out, no vertical jumps over 200 meters |
| 26 | All Strength functions by half |
| 27 | Gyros out, no jumps |
| 28 | Top speed reduced by half |
| 29 | Lose half energy in suit power supply |
| 30+ | Suit's muscles locked, paralyzed for 1d10 turns |

helmets, air vents on the suit's bottom, and so on.

Now that you know what powered armor is and isn't, what do you use it for? No, not for a barroom brawl against that Yazirian who tells you to go jump on an Arcturian slime amoeba. Neither is it used for capturing the last remaining tree-dwelling rhinosquid on Antares IV. Powered armor should be used wisely, because time is literally money where powered armor is employed. Such devastating firepower would be useful against armored vehicle or fortified positions held by deadly enemies – e.g., Sathar, pirates, etc. But just because you took on a dozen space pirates without a scratch doesn't mean that it's safe to go tackle those three hovertanks hiding around the corner. Ω

The Role of Books



An SCA mystery, wargamers as duelists, and rock-&-roll magic

©1988 John C. Bunnell

MURDER AT THE WAR

Mary Monica Pulver

St. Martin's 0-312-00622-5 \$16.95

The parallel may be inexact, but the Society for Creative Anachronism is certainly as legitimate an exercise in role-playing as are the AD&D® or RUNEQUEST® games. Not convinced? *Murder at the War* serves both to prove the point with amusing insights and to provide a clever whodunit with more than enough misdirection to counter its one obvious clue.

Mary Monica Pulver, herself an SCA member, has liberally spiced her novel with references that will make fellow anachronists chuckle knowingly. (Thanks are due to the expert consultant who pointed out several of the better in-jokes.) Yet the tale is just as enjoyable to readers outside the Society who have never held an imitation sword or knelt before the monarch presiding over a modern-day medieval court. It is, in fact, a charming and remarkably evenhanded introduction to the SCA, and Pulver retains a perceptive eye for the often eccentric appearances the group creates when faced with uninitiated observers.

Her scenario revolves around an annual "war" held in Pennsylvania in which SCA members from all over the eastern United States take part. Pulver's version of the war finds interkingdom politics bumping against the mundane problem of a rough and unpopular bully who is too fond of beer and too impatient with the rules of combat. It's no surprise that someone murders Thorstane early in the battle, though his dying message puzzles the assembled investigators for much too long. But if Pulver's first clue is virtually given away, those that follow are tucked coyly into the corners of a colorful, intricately stitched tapestry full of rapidly unfolding events.

Both the assorted SCA folk and the mundane investigators are likable and well-drawn, with nuances and reactions that bear the stamp of someone who has sharply observed reality. Sleuths Kori and Peter Brichter are especially well-conceived, and several subtle hints suggest that Pulver may be planning more novels about the duo, though not necessarily tales of SCA crimes. Such future books may be of peripheral interest to gamers, but *Murder at the War* is a wry, often wise delight for role-players as well as a pleasantly twisted puzzle. Rarely has a game been as well-planned.

AGNES DAY

Lionel Fenn

Tor 0-812-53789-0 \$2.95

One sign that this third book in a trilogy concerning a "Quest for the White Duck" is less than brilliant is that the testimonial

quote on the cover hasn't changed since it appeared on the first volume. It's painful to disagree with a writer as good as Diane Duane, but Lionel Fenn is not a "funny, funny writer," though not for lack of trying. Fenn, in fact, doesn't exist — which is the other sign. Lionel Fenn is the pseudonym for horror novelist Charles Grant, who doesn't need the anonymity to keep his works categorized or to avoid saturating the market.

Agnes Day and its predecessors lack a discernible sense of structure or a driving force, so they seem to consist of a gravelly, uneven track crowded with sight gags and set pieces. Only sheer force of will — the author's — connects the sequence. The third book's title is a prime example: It's supposedly a wickedly clever, multilingual pun, but Fenn/Grant fails to exploit the double meaning. The phrase sits there like an unloaded grenade waiting not to go off.

Protagonist Gideon Sunday and his sister Tuesday (Grant thinks that's hilarious) fare equally badly. Gideon is a former pro football star — a third-string would-be star, that is. But he readily admits his chronic ineptitude and bad luck as a quarterback, and it's boredom, not desperation, that sends him through his pantry into the realms of Chey. (Grant practically revels in his use of the cliche.) Once there, Gideon's content to be led by the nose into one inconclusive chase after another. Tuesday, meanwhile, seems more at home when trapped in a duck's body than she'd be if Gideon could change her back.

Most competent comic fantasy, in game or book form, has been successful either by virtue of memorable characters or by spinning its humor off a traditional style, situation, or plot. *Agnes Day* attempts to get by merely by telling jokes (and thin jokes at that). It's an effort that simply doesn't work, and both Grant and many game masters can learn from the book's (and trilogy's) lack of success.

MASTERPLAY

William F. Wu

Questar 0-445-20504-0 \$2.95

Reaching legal or political decisions via personal combat isn't a new concept; duels, battles, and agreements throughout history document the point. But William F. Wu's novel, like any good science-fiction tale, takes the idea to its logical conclusion in a tightly conceived story that places the plot setting somewhere east of the SQUAD LEADER game and west of the AD&D® game system, adding high-tech assistance for good measure.

In *Masterplay's* near-future world, wargamers are organized into a professional guild whose members may be hired as duelists, as an alternative to resolving legal disputes in a terminally overcrowded court system. Each gamer takes one side of a randomly selected historical battle, and the computer-determined winner of the simulation wins the lawsuit for his or

her client. As a side benefit, the games have become something of a spectator sport and (at least by implication) bettor's pastime; therefore, master-level gamers need agents, publicists, and the other trappings of stardom.

Ken Li has become a master just in time to join a controversy. New laws allow the beleaguered courts to order "trial by game" even if one of the parties involved in a case doesn't want it. A protest group has formed to oppose the Guild Act, and Ken's adjustment to his new status is complicated by a series of games that cast him as an international policy-maker, find him fighting for the life of a friend and rival gamer, and force him to confront his newfound lover across a holographic battlefield.

Wu has developed a thoroughly plausible background against which to lay his tale, showing a keen eye for secondary detail and corollary development. He also frames his issues concisely and objectively, so Ken's and Donna's opposing viewpoints both have merit, and both characters remain sympathetic to readers. And even when not engaged in philosophical arguments, Wu's lightly sketched characters have a sense of matter-of-fact authenticity about them, as if they had been pulled out of a real-life convention into the book.

Masterplay is neither epic nor high-powered allegory; it's a mild-mannered novel that doesn't pretend to importance. Wu's tale deserves high marks, however, for delivering a thought-provoking plot as well as an entertaining gaming scenario. This is the sort of science fiction that could very well come true — and that's a commodity far too rare not to appreciate.

SWORD AND SORCERESS IV

edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley

DAW 0-88677-210-9 \$3.50

TALES OF THE WITCH WORLD

created by Andre Norton

Tor 0-312-94475-6 \$15.95

For busy game masters, short stories have several advantages over novels. Short stories demand less reading time at a single stretch, tend to come in sizable quantities, and are often far more practical than novels when it comes to adapting published fiction for an established campaign. The trick, then, is to find good short-story collections — of which both Bradley's and Norton's latest offerings are solid examples.

Marion Zimmer Bradley is one of the few fantasy authors with a visible cadre of antifans, primarily as a result of the brand of feminism perceived to run through her Darkover novels. Whatever merits that debate has, they shouldn't be allowed to obscure the fact that Bradley's editorial talents are substantial. *Sword and Sorceress IV*, latest in an annual series, contains a diverse blend of tales featuring female heroines — and the very first story dispels

any worry over feminist stereotypes.

Indeed, the tales are varied enough that no one reader is likely to find all of them to his or her taste. My personal favorites are from Mercedes Lackey, Charles de Lint, and Deborah Vogel (Vogel's story being a potent vignette), but those who prefer a bit more blood and thunder will likely be drawn to Diana Paxson's and Robin Bailey's offerings. Dorothy Heydt's neo-Greek story is in a category unto itself. Though the authors are a mixed bag of veterans and brand-new talents, their works are of consistent quality — which is a credit to editor Bradley's skill.

Andre Norton's *Tales of the Witch World* opens her world to 17 new authorial visions. This anthology is just as good if not better at its high points than is *Sword & Sorceress IV*. It is not, however, as evenly absorbing as *Sword & Sorceress IV*, as not all of the contributors make the best use of the materials provided for Norton's world.

A.C. Crispin, Mercedes Lackey, and Caralyn Inks stand out as the best storytellers in this volume. All draw liberally and directly from Witch World lore in their offerings, and all present strong-minded characters faced with grave challenges. Of the three authors, Inks presents the most effective tale, a sharply stylized story of witchcraft, but Crispin and Lackey shine brightly as well.

Kiel Stuart, Carol Severance, and Marylois Dunn are less successful with works that are shaded too young and are loosely tied to Norton's universe. The Severance tale, by the author's own admission, strains to fit the setting and might easily have been published elsewhere. All three also share a tired lonely-or-misunderstood-child-matures theme that is carried out with insufficient subtlety to compensate for its familiarity.

Still, despite the uneven spots and a puzzling editorial glitch — why is Judith Tar's biography in the back of the book without a story to go with it? — Norton has still produced an above-average collection. Game masters looking for literary inspiration from which to adapt new worlds for their players can do much worse than *Tales of the Witch World*.

The virtues of the fourth *Sword & Sorceress* book are less easily translated into modules, but the craftsmanship in Bradley's choices bears appreciation. Both anthologies are able to teach as well as entertain, and in an age where it isn't easy to market short stories, both deserve all the rewards they can ask for.

WAR FOR THE OAKS

Emma Bull

Ace 0-441-87073-2 \$3.50

If I'm ever persuaded to migrate out of Portland, I'll seriously consider moving to Minneapolis. Something in that city's atmosphere or water supply seems to turn people into highly skilled fantasy novelists.

Of course, if Emma Bull's *War for the Oaks* is to be believed, I'd be taking up residence in a combat zone. But the purely magical night life awaiting visitors to Bull's city makes it worth the risk.

Emma Bull is a member of the Minneapolis-based Scribbles, a writers' group whose ranks have already produced several talented writers. *War for the Oaks*, though, is special even in that company. Very few modern fantasists can meld reality and faerie so closely that a photograph would fail to show signs of the special effects. For example, Peter Beagle's *The Folk of the Air* is a brilliant book, but there's never any doubt that Beagle's town of Avicenna is an imaginary place. Yet it is never questioned that somewhere in Minneapolis, there is a rock-and-roll band whose members include a phouka, a faerie lord, and a bass player of magical skill.

Actually, the phouka is just the road manager, and band leader Eddi McCandry is entirely mortal. At first, the band seems mostly peripheral to the war into which the phouka has drafted Eddi, on the side of the Seelie Court. But as events and various sorts of rehearsals unfold, it becomes clear that music has a crucial part to play in the battle Eddi must fight, as the powers of faerie wage increasing influence on mundane Minneapolis.

Part of this story's uncannily believable tone comes from Bull's knowledgeable view of behind-the-scenes band life, part from her matter-of-fact yet fog-edged portraits of assorted sprites and faerie landscapes, and a very large part from the phouka, who almost steals the novel from Eddi. The mischievous cheerfulness of a large dog (which is this phouka's alternate shape), a relentlessly stubborn streak, and a penchant for infuriatingly clever comebacks combine to make Eddi's faerie guardian completely irresistible and utterly human.

The plot of *War for the Oaks* isn't all that complex. But the characters are drawn with such convincing detail that they might easily be living next door. Thrusting normal people into Bull's magical conflict also produces all the fireworks one could hope for. This book is one to read for the sheer wonder of seeing a master storyteller at work, in hopes that a touch of the wizardry might rub off. The fact that it's lots of fun as well is almost beside the point.

TRIPLET

Timothy Zahn

Baen 0-671-65341-5 \$3.95

Triplet's premise would make a nearly perfect challenge for an RPG campaign, if it could be comfortably accommodated by one set of game mechanics. As it is, the unusual blend of magic and ultrahigh technology coupled with a diabolical detective mission makes Timothy Zahn's novel an even more eclectic stew than is often the result in speculative fiction.

Zahn does not delve too deeply into the explanation of a universe in which magic and technology are both legitimate physical phenomena, but he does keep his magic on a very tight metaphysical leash. The world of Karyx, innermost of the three world's which make up the planet known as Triplet, has access to a veritable army of intangible spirits in a hierarchy ranging from lowly spirits to awesome elementals and demogorgons. The human inhabitants of Karyx rely on a host of spells to control this population and make it do their bidding.

The catch is that subtle, unknown loopholes in the rules seem to be enabling the spirits to filter upward and outward from Karyx into Shamsheer, the middle layer of Triplet's spherical sandwich. The progression is hard to detect and slow to build (spirits apparently have trouble operating the infinitely detailed microcircuitry of Shamsheer's elegantly disguised technological hardware), but could pose an enormous threat to the civilized galaxy if not stopped.

Which is where Danae mal ce Taeger comes in. Danae, the daughter of an absurdly wealthy space tycoon, has planned a visit to Triplet's inner worlds as a means of finally escaping the force-feeding luxury of "Daddy Dear." Guided by a trained expert in world travel and followed by her unwanted but unshakable personal bodyguard, Danae stumbles across the spirit rebellion and triggers an involved chase back toward Triplet's outer shell.

The individual confrontations in this novel aren't especially striking, and the characters are mostly ordinary (except for Hart, the bodyguard, who gets off some good lines in an intriguingly conceived series of dilemmas). What makes *Triplet* distinctive is the logic behind it — which really isn't a surprise, as Zahn is known for science fiction rather than fantasy, and the novel is clearly in the former category despite its thick fantasy sugarcoating.

By themselves, though, the ideas aren't enough to make *Triplet* worth recommending. Zahn doesn't follow them through; instead, he rushes the story's climax, shortchanging both heroes and villains in the process. But if the novel is barely worth reading on its own, it's a gold mine for gamers seeking a unique setting in which to develop a campaign. As a gaming aid, *Triplet* is beautifully detailed and more than worth its price. As a novel, it's quite a disappointment. Zahn is capable of far better work; clearly, he hasn't put forth his best effort in this case.

Recurring roles

A full-fledged Mongol horde of sequels and continuations is rising from my desk this month, nearly all of them distinctive enough to warrant specific comments. The remaining few threaten to leap off the top of the stack and land on my head. Self-preservation demands at least an attempt

to thin their ranks before the next deadline. Therefore . . .

Jack Chalker's three new books testify mostly to an increased typing speed rather than to a creative outburst. Best of them is *Warriors of the Storm* (Del Rey, \$3.95), the third book in his Rings of the Master science-fiction series, mostly because of the extremely odd, artificial civilization that takes up most of the story and largely pushes aside the ongoing plot. Ideas like this might be enough to propel Chalker into the ranks of "thinking" novelists like Asimov and Clarke . . .

. . . but *The Shadow Dancers* (Tor, \$3.95) and *When the Changewinds Blow* (Ace, \$3.50) signify a truly shocking lack of judgment both on Chalker's part and on the parts of his editors. Both books feature female protagonists, and both take their heroines through bizarre and lengthy adventures disguised as plot development — adventures that lead the women into prostitution, for example. *Shadow Dancers*, second in the G.O.D. Inc. series, at least gives undercover agent Brandy Horowitz some justification for her actions and seems aimed at a fairly mature audience. But *Changewinds* stars two school-aged girls thrust into a magical world, and offers its characters no real options. (It's also nearly devoid of plot, serving as a book-length set-up for the series premise.) Like most fantasy, this book will be read largely by young people, but its characters are potentially bad role models. (Debates over sexual freedom aside, Chalker might at least have shown some sign of having heard of AIDS.) These books are not for light reading.

The Warlock Heretical (Ace, \$2.95) is a much more pleasant surprise. In turning to matters of the medieval Church, Christopher Stasheff has breathed new life into his Warlock cycle and has worked an absorbing twist on the continuing saga of royal politics in Gramarye. There's not quite as much sharp comedy this time around, but the Order of St. Vidicon is more than startling enough to make up for the lack. It's also an advantage that Stasheff's tales are mostly self-contained, thus making it possible for a reader to start in the middle of the series and still understand the action.

That's the chief liability of Diana Paxson's *The Earthstone* (Tor, \$3.50), fourth in a sequence concerning the realm of Westria. The first two volumes are currently out of print, though they provided some significant background that won't be available to those who joined the adventure with *Silverhair the Wanderer*. But the problem is a minor one, and this newest chapter in the saga adds a certain richness of vision to Paxson's world. On the other hand, she may have a hard time topping the climax of this book in the three slated to follow.

Swords of the Legion (Del Rey, \$3.95) concludes Harry Turtledove's cycle set in Videssos in highly impressive style, with

the emphasis on personal quests rather than large-scale battles. Yet the series maintains its overall unity, and it stands as a solid combination of historically based fantasy and darkly magical adventure. The dark sorcerer Avshar is definitely one of the more memorable servants of evil to crop up in recent months.

Villains are much harder to find in *Suspicion* (Ace, \$2.95), second in the Isaac Asimov's Robot City sequence. Mike McQuay's solution to the whodunit posed at the end of the first book is flawlessly logical, yet somehow disappointing. While McQuay's mastery of Asimovian robotic dialogue doesn't quite match that of earlier writer Michael Kube-McDowell, that's a minor problem beside the casual disappearance of the Key to Perihelion from the tale's plot. The series seems to be left without a McGuffin, and *Masterplays* William F. Wu has lots of pieces to fit into the next book.

On the other hand, there's a genuine Alfred Hitchcock McGuffin in John M. Ford's *How Much for Just the Planet?* (Pocket, \$3.95), which arrived just in time to throw this column's deadline into chaos. Ford's second Star Trek novel is an outrageously spectacular farce in which in-jokes breed faster than tribbles, yet leave more than enough gags accessible to bewilder Kirk and his crew several times over. One

ploy that didn't quite work in *The Roman Way* fits much better here — a very close check of character names reveals that Ford's dedication should be taken quite literally. And oh, what readers might pay for the videotape version!

Less flash marks *Arrow's Flight* (DAW, \$3.50), but the middle volume of Mercedes Lackey's trilogy makes up for the relative mildness with strong narrative style that draws readers firmly into Talia's world. There are again potent echoes of McCaffrey's Harper Hall, and again Lackey virtually ignores the supposedly imminent crisis that caused Talia to be Chosen as the Queen's Own Herald. Nevertheless, the novel remains quite enjoyable due to its strong characterizations. The next book may finally deliver on the sequence's initial promise of a rousing action-adventure yarn.

Liavek: Wizards Row (Ace, \$2.95), the third volume in a shared-world series, has no problem delivering on its promise of enjoyment. Though editors Will Shetterly and Emma Bull provide a rather slim volume this time around, the stories are as well-crafted as ever, and offer a pleasant balance between new and returning characters. In particular, John M. Ford's "Green is the Color" is a dark-edged mystery whose success testifies to his versatility.

The Crossroads gamebook series can

now be moved from the experimental shelf to the successful one. Both Matt Costello's, *Revolt on Majipoor* and Tom Wham's *Prospero's Isle* (both Tor, \$3.50) accomplish the difficult, threefold task of telling absorbing stories, weaving significant game mechanics into the tales, and remaining essentially true to the worlds in which the adventures occur. Costello's solution to the game-mechanics problem is unusual in this format, while Wham gives more of the intricate, unpredictable flavor of the form in his offering. One technical criticism: Harold Shea's magic in *Prospero's Isle* should ideally have called for Shakespearean blank verse, but Wham's astutely zany sense of plot makes up for the slightly off-key poetry.

Night Arrant (New Infinites, \$3.95) is harder to classify. Gary Gygax does indeed turn out to be more effective at crafting short stories than he is at sustaining novel-length plots, but a tendency to interlink some of the tales in this collection sometimes undercuts the benefits of the short form. Still, there's a substantial body of Greyhawk lore in the collection, and several of the stories turn on plot points easily adapted to individual campaigns. It should also be noted in passing that the title's wordplay doesn't quite fit either the book or its linguistic origins.

Ω



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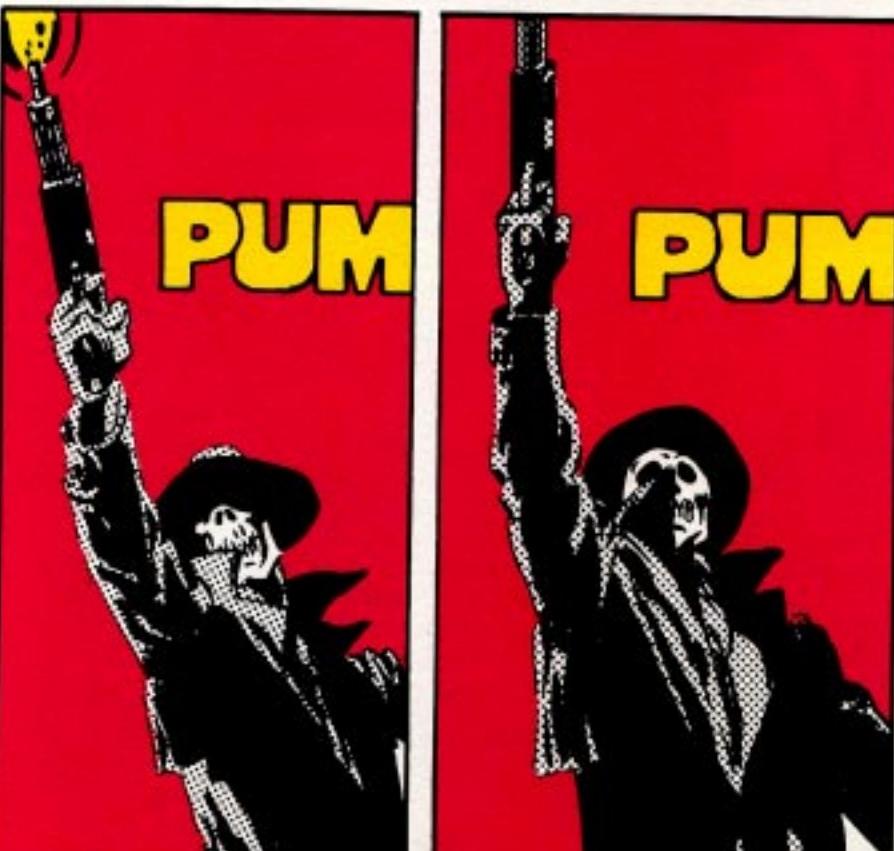
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The Marvel®-Phile

Justice is served! (Part 1)



by Jeff Grubb

The results are in on our informal poll on whether or not to do *all* of the victims of the recent slayer of Marvel Super Villains: Scourge. The readers made two points: First, the majority of people said "Yes, let's see everyone that Scourge has bumped off." Apparently, being dead doesn't count against your popularity in the Marvel Universe. But strongly voiced, too, was: "Don't take up too much room, or use multiple 'Marvel-Philes,' in order to do it." [We had to split this into two parts. The list was too long! — Editor]

Hmm. What follows is the first part of "The Marvel®-Phile's Two-Minute Drill," in which I cram as much as I can into as small a space as possible. If we've covered a particular victim elsewhere in a MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game product, the reference is mentioned. Here, then, are the known victims of the Scourge of the Underworld — and (in the next issue) Scourge as well.



ENFORCER™ Charles L. Delazny, Jr.
F A S E R I P
EX GD GD EX GD GD EX
Health: 60 Karma: 30
Resources: TY Popularity: -10

KNOWN POWERS:

Body Armor: EX rank, with silver-nitrate-covered vest for werewolves (see DRAGON® issue #126, page 76).

Infravision: RM intensity.

Weapons: Two .45 caliber guns with special ammo:

- * Ordinary bullets (TY damage);
- * Silver bullets (TY damage, for werewolves);
- * Tranquilizer pellets (IN intensity);
- * Pyrogranulate capsules (RM-intensity fire damage); and,
- * IN-intensity "Tingler" that changes the victim's metabolism, causing the victim to burst into flame (IN intensity) by post-hypnotic command.

Disintegrator Amulet: Later a ring, lost before the Enforcer's death (IN intensity, 1-area range).

TALENTS: Handguns, Martial Arts A, and Hypnotism.

CONTACTS: No major contacts.

HIS LIFE: A criminal mercenary, the Enforcer fought the Ghost Rider, Spider-Woman, Spider-Man, and Werewolf, operating primarily on the West Coast.

HIS DEATH: On assignment to kill another criminal (the Termite), the Enforcer was shot by Scourge, who was disguised as a bag lady.

MIRACLE MAN™ Name unknown

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| F | A | S | E | R | I | P |
| PR | GD | TY | TY | EX | EX | UN |

Health: 26 Karma: 160

Resources: PR Popularity: -30

KNOWN POWERS:

Mass Hypnotism: UN intensity; required eye contact to maintain and worked over TV screens; mildly telepathic in nature.

Psionic Powers: Powers taught to Miracle Man by Cheemuzwa Indians:

- * Increase his Strength to the MN rank;
- * Produce power blasts of AM energy or force; and,
- * Rearrange nonliving matter with AM ability.

LIMITATION: These psionic powers had the negative effect of reducing the stability of Earth's radioactive materials, such that those materials within 50 miles were +1CS in damage and -1CS in stability per hour of exposure.

TALENTS: None.

CONTACTS: No major contacts.

HIS LIFE: An egotistical world conqueror, Miracle Man used his hypnotic powers to fight the Fantastic Four. He gained psionic abilities from an ancient Indian tribe and battled the Thing, Ghost Rider, and the Defenders.

HIS DEATH: Miracle Man was shot by Scourge, who was disguised as a fellow bus passenger, after causing a battle between the Thing and the Rhino.

MORE INFO: MA4 *The Fantastic Four™ Compendium*.

**HATE-MONGER III™** "H.M. Unger"

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| F | A | S | E | R | I | P |
| TY | TY | TY | GD | PR | PR | MN |

Health: 28 Karma: 83

Resources: NA Popularity: -40

KNOWN POWERS:

Emotion Control: Hate generation in others, at a range of 2 areas (AM intensity) or on touch (UN intensity).

Shape Changing: IN rank.

TALENTS: None.

CONTACTS: Psycho-Man.

HIS LIFE: Created by the Psycho-Man as his agent in creating havoc in our dimension by stirring up hate, Hate-Monger fought the Fantastic Four. Note that Hate-Monger I was a clone of Adolf Hitler, and Hate-Monger II was the Man-Beast, a creature from Counter-Earth.

HIS DEATH: The Hate-Monger was killed from the shadows by Scourge after being abandoned by his master.

MORE INFO: MHSP2 *Secret Wars™ II*.

MEGATAK™ Gregory Nettles

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| F | A | S | E | R | I | P |
| EX | EX | RM | AM | TY | TY | TY |

Health: 130 Karma: 18

Resources: TY Popularity: 0

KNOWN POWERS:

Electrical Power: MN intensity; could create video images in 3D, which could then attack (RM material strength and damage); could also inflict MN electrical damage on touch or up to 1 area away.

TALENTS: Espionage.

CONTACTS: None.

HIS LIFE: An industrial spy, Nettles was inside an experimental video display and thus gained his powers. He was defeated by Thor and Sif.

HIS DEATH: It is unknown if Megatak regained his electrical abilities, which were drained by Thor. As soon as he reappeared in New York, he was gunned down by Scourge.

**TITANIA™**

Davida DeVito

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| F | A | S | E | R | I | P |
| RM | EX | RM | EX | TY | TY | TY |

Health: 100 Karma: 18

Resources: GD Popularity: 5

KNOWN POWERS: None.

TALENTS: Martial Arts A, B, C, and E.

CONTACTS: The Power Broker, the UCWF's Grapplers, and Roxxon Oil.

HER LIFE: A mercenary and former wrestler turned criminal agent for Roxxon, Titania fought the Thing, Giant-Man, Quasar, and Dazzler before going straight and joining the Unlimited Class Wrestling Federation with her former teammates.

HER DEATH: Titania was killed in the shower by Scourge, who was disguised as another female wrestler named Golddigger. This hit lends support to the possibility that there were multiple Scourges, at least one of whom was a woman.

**MELTER™** Bruno Horgan

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| F | A | S | E | R | I | P |
| GD | TY | TY | GD | EX | TY | TY |

Health: 32 Karma: 32

Resources: EX Popularity: -20

KNOWN POWERS:

Melting Ray: Microwave device which could "melt" (actually liquify) stone, wood, metal, and flesh on the separate settings, with RM effects and range; more powerful version of this ray rumored to exist.

TALENTS: Engineering, Repair/Tinkering, and Business/Finance.

CONTACTS: Masters of Evil I and II, and Justin Hammer.

HIS LIFE: A madman inventor, the Melter was a former competitor of Tony Stark who usually fought Iron Man and the Avengers. He became quite infamous as a result.

HIS DEATH: The Melter was slain by Scourge, disguised as a lab assistant, on the eve of the Melter's latest plot against the Avengers. His latest Melter device was destroyed by Scourge. The Melter was probably Scourge's most important victim.

MORE INFO: MA2 *Avengers™ Coast-to-Coast*.

BASILISK™

Basil Elks

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| F | A | S | E | R | I | P |
| TY | GD | EX | RM | GD | TY | TY |

Health: 66 Karma: 18

Resources: PR Popularity: -5

KNOWN POWERS:

Body Armor: GD rank.

Resistance to Heat: AM intensity.

Force Blasts: MN intensity force.

Heat Blasts: AM intensity energy.

Ice Blasts: IN intensity, GD Strength ice (all "blasts" came from Basilisk's eyes).

Flight: Shift Z rank.

TALENTS: None.

CONTACTS: None.

HIS LIFE: A former burglar given special abilities by the Kree Alpha-Stone and Omega-Stone, Basilisk fought Spider-Man, the Thing, Captain Mar-Vell, and Mr. Fantastic.

HIS DEATH: Basilisk found his way into the subbasement of the FF's new HQ, but was killed in the building by Scourge, who was disguised as a construction worker.

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PUM

HAMMER™

Leroy Jackson

ANVIL™

John Anvil

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| F | A | S | E | R | I | P |
| RM | EX | EX | RM | PR | TY | TY |
| RM | EX | EX | RM | PR | TY | TY |

Health: 100 each, 200 combined

Karma: 16 each Popularity: -5

Resources: PR

KNOWN POWERS:

Synthecon: This was an alien device that linked the two men at the wrist, allowing them to absorb physical (slugfest or force) damage without harm, and to use that rank of Strength for the next 10 turns. Those coming in contact with the device (other than Hammer and Anvil) took that strength rank of energy damage. Energy and missile attacks were unaffected by this protection.

TALENTS: None.**CONTACTS:** Deterrence Research Corporation.**THEIR LIVES:** Chain-gang prisoners who escaped and inadvertently rescued an alien who gave them the Synthecon device, Hammer and Anvil usually fought the Hulk, but also fought Spider-Man, Spider-Woman, and the Guardians of the Galaxy.**THEIR DEATHS:** Lured into the desert to fight the Hulk, Hammer was shot by Scourge, disguised as an Indian shaman. Linked by the Synthecon to his dead ally, Anvil died soon afterward.**FLY™**

Richard Deacon

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| F | A | S | E | R | I | P |
| EX | IN | RM | IN | PR | MN | GD |

Health: 130 Karma: 91

Resources: PR Popularity: -5

KNOWN POWERS:**Flight:** EX (10 areas/turn).**Wall Crawling:** RM intensity.**TALENTS:** None.**CONTACTS:** None.**HIS LIFE:** Given his abilities by a criminal scientist who merged Deacon's genetic makeup with that of a fly, Deacon killed the scientist but discovered that his own personality was being taken over by flylike behavior. In his last few months of life, he was a mad man-monster.**HIS DEATH:** The Fly escaped from confinement and was immediately slain by Scourge.**MORE INFO:** MHAC7 *Concrete Jungle*.**DEATH ADDER™**

Roland Burroughs

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| F | A | S | E | R | I | P |
| RM | GD | RM | GD | TY | GD | TY |

Health: 80 Karma: 22

Resources: GD Popularity: -5

KNOWN POWERS:**Body Armor:** EX rank.**Gills:** Could breath water.**Swimming:** 4 areas/turn.**Bionic Tail:** Fully functional fifth limb that could inflict IN damage.**Poison:** On claws, AM intensity.**LIMITATION:** Death Adder was mute.**TALENTS:** None.**CONTACTS:** Roxxon Oil and the Serpent Society.**HIS LIFE:** Created by Roxxon Oil to be a member of the Serpent Squad, Burroughs fought the Thing, Stingray, and Captain America. He later joined the independent Serpent Society.**HIS DEATH:** His "Serpent Saucer" damaged, Death Adder was forced to take a cab. Scourge was the cabbie. Following the recovery of Death Adder's body from a police morgue, the Serpent Society did all in its power to find and slay Scourge.**MORE INFO:** MHAC7 *Concrete Jungle*.**BLUE STREAK™**

Brian DeWolff

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| F | A | S | E | R | I | P |
| GD | GD | GD | GD | GD | EX | IN |

Health: 40 Karma: 70

Resources: TY Popularity: 0

KNOWN POWERS:**Rocket Skates:** AM ground speed, forward and backward, allowing GD leaping.**Body Armor:** GD rank.**Lasers:** Mounted on arms of suit, doing IN damage.**Caltrops:** Used to puncture tires of pursuing cars.**TALENTS:** Espionage.**CONTACTS:** The Corporation.**HIS LIFE:** A foreign spy who infiltrated the SHIELD "super-agents" program, Blue Streak pursued a career as a freelance criminal in the Midwest after his prison term. He usually fought Captain America and once worked with Vamp (see next month's "The Marvel-Phile").**HIS DEATH:** After a battle with Cap, one of Blue Streak's rocket skates was damaged. Hitching a ride with a trucker, Blue Streak found out too late that the trucker was Scourge.

PUM

**WRAITH™**

Brian DeWolff

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| F | A | S | E | R | I | P |
| GD | GD | GD | GD | GD | EX | IN |

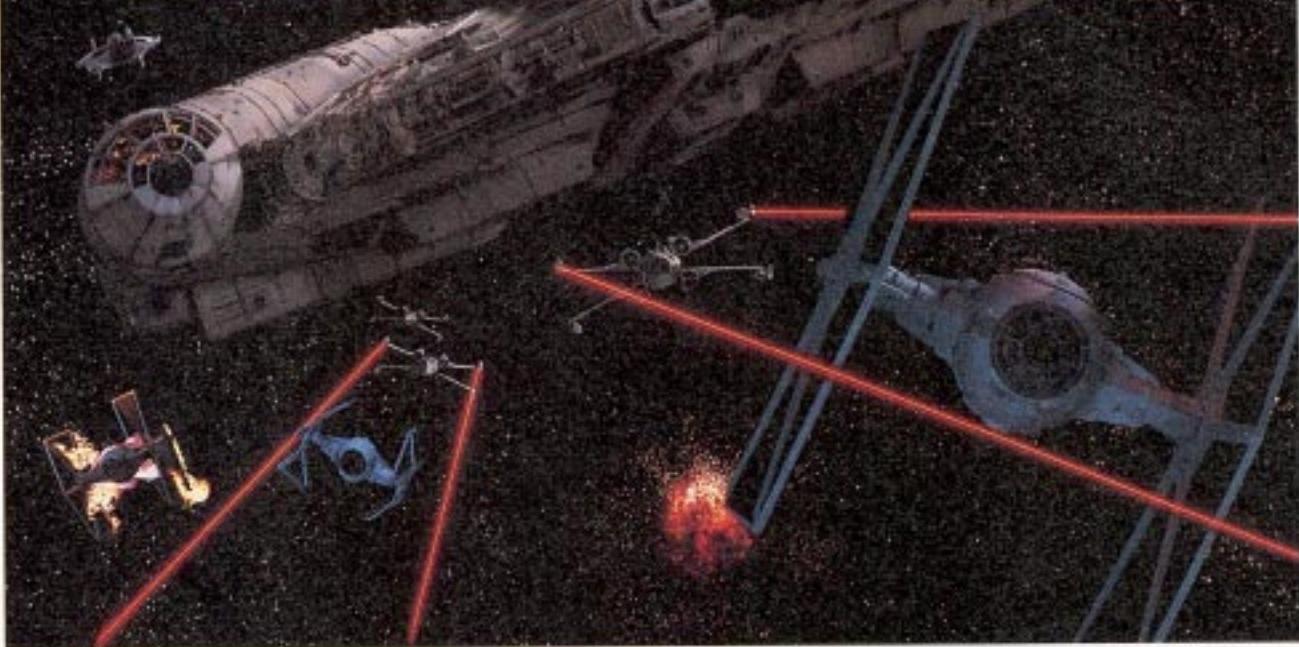
Health: 40 Karma: 70

Resources: TY Popularity: 0

KNOWN POWERS:**Thought Reading:** AM intensity.**Image Projection:** MN intensity, 3-area range; used to make himself invisible and undetectable as a power stunt.**Telekinesis:** AM intensity.**Mental Attack:** 2-area range, MN intensity, affected Health without harming someone's physical body.**Mind Control:** MN intensity.**TALENTS:** Law Enforcement and Handguns.**CONTACTS:** Tony Stark/Iron Man and the NYPD.**HIS LIFE:** Patrolman Brian DeWolff was shot by criminals and rescued by his father, who used experimental technologies to restore Brian's health and to give him both psionic abilities and a link with his father's mind. Controlled by his father, Brian killed several criminals and fought Spider-Man, Iron Man, and Doctor Strange. Brian was found innocent of the crimes, but his father was sent to prison. The Wraith became a costumed adventurer and an ally of the original Iron Man.**HIS DEATH:** Driven mad by the murder of his sister Jean, the Wraith returned to New York to attack the New York Police Department. He arrived at a station house as Scourge was leaving (having failed to kill Flash Thompson, believed by Scourge to be the Hobgoblin). Scourge shot down Wraith down instead. While Wraith had criminal intent when Scourge shot him, Brian DeWolff had no criminal record.

Next month, we visit the "bar with no name" — and say good-bye to more Marvel Super Villains.

HERE IT COMES!



West End Games proudly announces the release of the first three products in our exciting new *Star Wars* game line — *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game*, *The Star Wars Sourcebook*, and *Star Warriors*.

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Roleplaying Game is contained in one book! A game simple enough for novices, yet detailed enough to satisfy even the most avid fan. *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game* includes an introduction to roleplaying, a solo-adventure, and a ready-to-play multi-player adventure!

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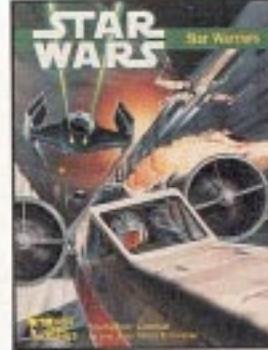
battles! *Star Warriors* can be played with *Star Wars: The Roleplaying Game*, or on its own.

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* 144-page hardcover book, printed 2-colors throughout. \$14.95



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Role-playing Reviews



All the world's a dungeon

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TSR, Inc., may plausibly claim to be the pioneer among fantasy campaign setting publishers. The EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE game, published in 1975, is a campaign setting based on variant D&D® game rules (see "Role-playing Reviews" in DRAGON® issue #128). However, TSR neglected the EPT supplement and failed to exploit its potential as a setting for published fantasy adventures. Further-

more, TSR did not develop another campaign setting at this time, although the basic elements of the Greyhawk and Blackmoor campaigns might easily have formed the foundation for such supplements. It remained for other game publishers to provide the early models for FRPG campaign settings.

In 1979, Chaosium published the classic *Cults of Prax* supplement, the first of the great Gloranthan campaign supplements. In 1982, Iron Crown Enterprises began publishing its Middle-earth® game supple-

ments. In 1983, Columbia Games began publishing its HARN™ supplements. These three are only the most eminent of the published campaign supplements of this period; other companies — Judges Guild (*City State of the Invincible Overlord*), Gamelords (*The Free City of Haven*), and Midkemia (*Carse and Jonril*) — also made valuable contributions to the art of the campaign supplement, particularly in the area of city design. Throughout this period, however, TSR continued to concentrate on adventure modules rather than campaign supplements. Sophisticated gamers like myself slyly observed to one another that TSR was missing out on a good thing.

Then, in 1983, it looked like TSR, Inc., caught on. The WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ setting, Gary Gygax's campaign, was published in a two-volume boxed set, complete with pretty maps. And the revised D&D Expert boxed set featured its own campaign setting, including a campaign map and brief descriptions of various nations and cultures.

But the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting never really caught on. It was not as richly imagined or presented as the Chaosium, Iron Crown, or Harn campaign settings, and TSR did little to support it with subsequent packages. And though a number of revised D&D game adventure modules were based in the D&D game world settings, no dedicated campaign supplements were published.

In 1984, the first DRAGONLANCE® saga module was published. The subsequent DRAGONLANCE novels, modules, and other supplements have been very popular, though the quality of the background material has been stretched a bit thin by the relentless exploitation of the trademark. The Gloranthan, Middle-earth, and Harn campaigns, developed over a number of years specifically as FRPG campaign supplements, have a deeper text and finer texture than the DRAGONLANCE materials. The real strength of the assorted DRAGONLANCE novels was in plot, characterization, and theme, rather than in background and setting detail, so game designers had less to work with in developing subsequent campaign supplements. However, even given the uneven quality of some DRAGONLANCE products, the campaign as a whole is still remarkable for its popularity and for the sheer volume of supplements and spin-off products.

The success of DRAGONLANCE material convinced TSR that there was a market for campaign supplements. For the D&D game, TSR decided to produce a series of campaign supplements called Gazetteers, that would flesh out and develop the D&D game world introduced in the D&D Expert Set. For the AD&D® game, the parting of ways with Gary Gygax discouraged further development of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting. Ed Greenwood, a frequent contributor to DRAGON Magazine, had a detailed, 10-year-old house

campaign that TSR elected to develop as the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ campaign setting.

The Gazetteers promise a variety of compatible campaign settings rather than a single, coherent world campaign. No single publication (other than the scanty notes in the D&D Expert Set rulebook) provides an overview of the featured continent. The inside cover of the *Master DM's Book* displays a map of the D&D game Known World, based on our world's prehistoric Pangea protocontinent, with a list of 31 nations and empires — but no notes, no nothing. (Name three principal exports of Zyx! Name one.) This campaign setting doesn't even have a proper name, other than "The Known World" — hardly a sonorous title to compare with Glorantha, Middle-earth, or Harn.

However, from a designer and game master's point of view, this casual attitude is refreshing and appealing. The Gazetteers promise to be tolerant of offbeat, divergent, and experimental notions of what makes a good FRPG campaign. TSR apparently envisions its revised D&D game line as the home for the liberal, spontaneous wing of D&D game fantasy role-players. The detailed review of *Principality of Glantri* that follows elaborates on this more open-ended, free-wheeling attitude toward D&D game campaigns.

The FORGOTTEN REALMS setting and the AD&D game line, on the other hand, appear to be aimed more at the conservative, coherent faction of fantasy role-players. The tone is neither harsh nor repressive, as it occasionally was in TSR's past; rather, it encourages exploitation of the wealth of rules and resources provided by the AD&D game hardback rulebooks. In terms of the campaign world, the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting promises to expand the area covered by the original boxed set in future publications, and even intends to integrate Kara-Tur, the *Oriental Adventures* AD&D game campaign setting, into this world. For game masters and players who appreciate a coherent, plausible world setting using a relatively stable set of rules and conventions, the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting is the appropriate choice.

Sizing up the settings

Three of the classic campaign settings — the RUNEQUEST® game's Glorantha and Alternate Earth, and the MERPTM game's Middle-earth — are brilliant, esoteric, and narrowly conceived. They are also rule-specific and difficult to adapt to D&D game systems. The RUNEQUEST game also suffers from a dearth of support material, with many of its finest supplements now out-of-print and with new products few and far between. As a final evaluation: Great, but for a limited audience.

Two strong campaign settings — Harn and the WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLE-PLAY game's Old World — are closer to the

D&D game's style of fantasy role-playing. Harn is distinctive for its color and detail. The WFR campaign, though promising and original in atmosphere and presentation, has yet to prove itself in a series of campaign supplements. Harn is complete, well-developed, open-ended, superior in quality, and similar in style to the D&D game. WFR is a promising but immature campaign — one worth watching in the years to come.

The DRAGONLANCE saga's Krynn is a well-developed, fairly orthodox, but narrowly conceived AD&D game campaign. Unless you're thinking of running a DRAGONLANCE campaign, it is not suitable as an AD&D game campaign setting. These materials are well-done, but too narrow to support most typical D&D game adventures.

The D&D game Gazetteers are state-of-the-art, well-developed, open-ended campaign settings with a high tolerance for experimentation in tone, theme, and variant rules. The contrasting styles and cultures of each Gazetteer give game masters a variety of campaign models to shop through in search of one that suits his own preferences. The Gazetteers are ideal for free-wheeling DMs and players with a more casual attitude toward established rules and coherent campaign overviews.

The FORGOTTEN REALMS setting is deeply rooted in the traditional AD&D game style of dungeon and wilderness adventures. The presentation is particularly supportive of beginning DMs in search of their first campaign world; at the same time, it provides substantial material for characters of intermediate levels of character power. This campaign supplement is the best choice for most established AD&D gamers.

GAZ 3 *The Principalities of Glantri*

A D&D game campaign supplement
TSR, Inc. \$8.95

Design: Bruce Heard

Editing: Karen Martin and Aaron Allston
Cover: Clyde Caldwell

Interior illustrations: Stephen Fabian
Graphic design and cartography: Dave Sutherland, Dennis Kauth, and Ron Kauth

A nation run by an aristocracy of magic-users? And numbered among that aristocracy are, in disguise, lycanthropes, vampires, necromancers, liches, and Immortals? And a nation where religion is prohibited, and where being a cleric is a capital offense? Quite an unusual D&D game setting, yes?

Each Gazetteer treats one nation or empire of the D&D game's Known World. The Gazetteers have three basic elements: cultural and geographic background, features, and adventures. The cultural and geographic campaign background section offers a brief history and timeline for each nation; basic geography, climate, and ecology; and, fundamental social and

political concepts of the region. The features section could include any of a variety of typical FRPG campaign elements. For example, the first Gazetteer, *The Grand Duchy of Karameikos*, features an extensive collection of detailed NPCs. The second Gazetteer, *The Emirates of Ylruam*, features a detailed desert village. Glantri's special features include a fantasy city and variant magic systems. Finally, each Gazetteer offers a list of scenario ideas appropriate to the campaign setting.

The campaign background section is completely executed, with several exceptionally noteworthy virtues. First, the nation's economy is explicitly developed in accordance with the dominion rules from the D&D Companion Set, providing a good example of their application in a campaign context. The nation's armed forces are also described in *War Machine* terms (the D&D Companion Set's mass-combat system), for those who like a strategic warfare component to their fantasy campaigns.

Most notable, however, are the text descriptions and mechanics supporting the political element of a Glantri campaign. In Glantri, various aristocratic clans and houses struggle for control of the Council of Princes. The origins, objectives, and main personalities of each house and clan are described, along with the number of votes it controls in the council. Included among the political factions are medieval Scottish refugees from beyond space and time, blood-sucking nosferatu, liches, albino werewolves, dark-skinned elves in the manner of 17th-century Spanish nobles, expatriate Mongol princes, Immortals incognito — all in all, a pretty colorful and oddly assorted bunch, even if you ignore the fact that, all nobles in Glantri are also at least 9th-level magic-users. Nobody said politics had to be dull.

Initially, PCs are more often caught up willy-nilly in political intrigues, but as they grow in power and influence, they may campaign and negotiate with various factions to get support for their activities. Suppose, for example, one faction proposes an aggressive policy of seeking out and eliminating subversive lycanthropic elements from society. The faction controlled by disguised werewolves may covertly seek a defensive alliance with other factions of equally repellent pedigrees. The PCs may knowingly or unknowingly be hired by one or the other faction to support its cause. Higher-level characters may compete for noble titles, their entailed dominions, and the votes controlled by those dominions. Involving characters in the politics of the campaign, whether indirectly through adventuring or directly through maneuvering as nobles in the Council of Princes, can add a new level of participation in and enjoyment of an FRPG campaign.

With the exception of TSR's *Lankhmar™: City of Adventure*, Glantri City is the best-developed AD&D or D&D game city I've seen. FRPG city settings are generally such

specialized and esoteric subjects that I was surprised to find such an elaborately detailed city included in a Gazetteer.

Here's what I like best about Glantri City: Like Venice, Glantri City has canals rather than streets, and travel is by bridge, gondola, or private boat. The city also has a wonderful assortment of guilds and brotherhoods — the Beggar's Court, the Elven Liberation Front, the Free Fundamentalist Farmers, the Monster Handler's Syndicate, and the Thousand Fists of Khan, for example — with lively conflicting interests and dark political machinations. Also noteworthy is the calendar of seasonal festivals, each a charming invitation to a spirited city-adventure scenario.

I also like the smooth, almost tongue-in-cheek acceptance of the way D&D game fantasy conventions are integrated into the everyday life of Glantrian citizens. For example, the Monster Handler's Syndicate makes the presence of monsters almost commonplace here. The People's Spell-Casters Company is a criminal organization that employs foreign magic-users who cannot obtain local spell-casting licenses; the matter-of-fact acknowledgement of bureaucratic intrusion on spell-casting rights, and the equally matter-of-fact acknowledgement that mages denied legal employment will seek illegal employment, make the fantasy setting seem particularly plausible.

This Gazetteer offers a completely revised and elaborated view of the career of a magic-user. Enrollment in the Glantrian School of Magic permits a magic-user character to learn new skills, like quick spell-casting and spell combination. A new system for awarding experience points to magic-users is proposed, one more in keeping with the peculiar character of the magic-user class. Alternate Glantrian spell research and enchantment rules are offered, which permit magic-users to develop distinctive variations of common spells and magical items. Most importantly, the role-playing aspects of being a magic-user are emphasized. All the suggested optional rules and trappings encourage a magic-user to think of himself more as a sorcerer and enchanter than as a form of heavy artillery for dungeon-delving.

This Gazetteer also provides something that has been popular in variant D&D game systems for a decade, though never before sanctioned in an official TSR publication — PC spell-casting specialties. The Seven Secret Orders of the Great School of Magic are Alchemists, Dracologists, Elementalists, Illusionists, Necromancers, Cryptomancers (runemasters), and Witches. Access to new magical abilities is probably enough to excite the players in your campaign, but even nicer is the fact that once a PC enters a field of specialization, his magical abilities have a role-playing coherence never achieved with the hodge-podge of spells traditionally available to D&D game mages.

Finally, the Glantri campaign centers

around a charming magical artifact from the long-gone Blackmoor culture. It would be tasteless to reveal this elegant little mystery, but a hint may suffice. Can you say "Chernobyl?" Sure. I knew you could.

The 20 suggested scenario ideas are tied to distinctive features of the Glantrian campaign, and are good guides to the tone and character of adventures suitable in this setting. For example, one idea involves a night shipment of bugbears to the Annual Monster Fair in Glantri City. Somehow, the PCs' barges get tangled up with the barges of some of the monster handlers in the canals of Glantri. Some bugbears get loose and dive overboard into the water, there to play havoc with the local gondola traffic. Fishing the little devils out of the canals in the dark is no picnic, nosirree. A good 4-page "graduation test" is provided as well — a complete dungeon adventure designed to test L8 magic-users hoping to graduate from the Great School of Magic.

Visually, this campaign setting is one of the nicest things from TSR in a long time. The 22" x 34" map is printed in color on both sides. One side is a political/terrain hex map of Glantri, with insets of two villages and an army camp. The reverse is a spiffy map of Glantri City and its waterways. The map keys and building labels are in the text, so the map can be shared with the players. The Stephen Fabian interior illustrations are strikingly ornamented and full of character. The text is energetically and entertainingly presented, and is meant to be read with pleasure rather than dutifully studied. The text includes some fine bits of narrative and dialog to illustrate the rules and descriptive text, and generous suggestions and game-mastering tips for integrating Glantri into your campaign. And the good writing is not just a matter of style — there are a lot of clever, charming, and original insights into the peculiar role of the magic-user in fantasy role-playing games, and how he fits into the more-or-less medieval setting of the D&D game universe.

Evaluation: The Principalities of Glantri is well-written, nicely presented, and full of nifty and original suggestions for running a campaign in a land ruled by magic-users. There are plenty of ideas, tones, and themes to choose from, with a refreshingly flexible and spontaneous attitude toward introducing new rules and offbeat ideas.

The focus on magic-users in the campaign is the source of this campaign supplement's greatest strengths, but many DMs may hesitate to run a campaign in a setting where clerics are illegal but can be played covertly, and where MUs are heavily favored by rules and background. I'd just ignore what I found inconvenient. I think the pack is worth owning and reading, even if you never play it as a campaign. Don't worry if you primarily play the AD&D game — most of the ideas, characters, and settings are perfectly

appropriate for the AD&D game, and no AD&D game supplement offers such a rich development of the role of the magic-user.

FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Campaign Set

An AD&D game campaign supplement
TSR, Inc. **\$15.00**

Design: Ed Greenwood

Design and development: Jeff Grubb

Editing: Karen Martin

Cover: Keith Parkinson

Interior illustration: Jeff Easley, Keith Parkinson, Clyde Caldwell, and Tim Conrad

To properly appreciate the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting, consider two important but conflicting design requirements the official AD&D game campaign setting must satisfy:

1. *Compatibility with existing AD&D game campaigns.* Several million AD&D game house-campaigns currently exist, and, given the institutionalized imperative for creativity of FRPGs, you can bet that each one is distinctive and personalized — and probably incompatible with most other house campaigns.

2. *Colorful characters, themes, and cultures.* To appeal to creative and imaginative FRPG players, a setting has to have lots of color, detail, and atmosphere — just the thing to insure incompatibility with other colorful, detailed, and atmospheric house campaigns.

Each Gazetteer can be as colorful and distinctive as it likes; if you don't like a given setting, just keep hunting until you find one you like. The FORGOTTEN REALMS setting must encourage existing house campaigns to move to this new universe to make it a worthwhile purchase for experienced AD&D gamers. Unfortunately, the more colorful and distinctive the campaign setting is, the more likely it is to conflict with features of an existing house campaign. The DRAGONLANCE campaign is a good example — lots of nifty, offbeat ideas and striking features, but not likely to fit in well with many existing house campaigns.

The FORGOTTEN REALMS setting achieves these design objectives in a number of ways. First, the setting is vast. This first package covers only a piece of a continent, but that piece is several times larger than the United States. Second, the Realms campaign avoids the epic themes and theological frames of campaigns like Glorantha, Krynn, and Middle-earth, leaving room for the complex and contradictory jumble of pantheons and cultures encouraged by the AD&D game's developmental history. Finally, the Realms setting is a *game* setting, — not a narrative setting like Krynn and Middle-earth — and it is firmly rooted in the traditions of a decade of AD&D game campaigns and adventures, both published and "house."

The 96-page DM's Sourcebook of the Realms introduces the campaign setting, explains how to use it, offers some adventure resources, and provides two complete dungeon-style adventures. As I've said, the Realms are big enough to tolerate plenty of contrasting AD&D game campaigns and styles of play. Large areas are specifically set aside for house campaigns — no published materials will exploit those areas. In addition, one area is detailed in this package, but no subsequent publications will use that area; thus the DM gets basic background development but can exploit it as he likes, with no fear of contradicting future publications. Another nice feature is that this package covers only the western half of a continent; the eastern half is reserved for future publication of Kara-Tur, the official AD&D game Oriental campaign setting — a thoughtful gesture to those AD&D game characters who'd like to walk or sail to a well-developed and rules-compatible inscrutable East.

Three methods of entering the campaign are discussed: as novice gamers with 1st-level characters, as experienced gamers with 1st-level characters, and as characters of various levels from other campaigns. The Shadowdale village setting is aimed at novice campaign designers. The practical advice to DMs is particularly sound and well-presented using a rare economy of words. The suggestions for handling immigrants from other campaigns are less comprehensive. For example, there is no elegant rationale for stripping entering PCs of gross or incongruent magical items, and out-of-town clerics apparently receive their spells from their home-campaign's gods without ado. However, this is a tricky subject which has been extensively discussed in various magazine articles, and is only a problem for experienced gamers who presumably already have some experience in dealing with the problem.

The section on random encounters and the notes on the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting's dragons rub me the wrong way. I personally don't like random encounters, and I don't like assigning arbitrary percentage chances to creature behaviors (e.g., "Chaotic Dragons are only 50% likely to honor the terms of their contract"). These are traditional and honored elements of the AD&D game, though, and this sort of thing fortunately makes up only a tiny percentage of the total text. The selected NPCs are not particularly useful or appealing; they don't read very well, and there's no context into which they fit. An exception is Elminster, the sage and narrator of the package, who is an effective informant and presentation mouthpiece. Also, the detailed description of the Flaming Fist Mercenary Company is an interesting, extreme design example. Considering the *DMG* hirelings tables [pages 28-34], it's hard to see how this bunch can stay in business even at 10,000 gp a day, but I still think it is a neat idea

that is well presented.

The recent-news-and-rumors section, on the other hand, is excellent, offering perfect examples of AD&D game-scale fantasy scenario ideas in a charming and flavorful style. The two dungeon adventures are also first-class. "Halls of the Beast-Tamers" provides a solid rationale for the ever-popular monster-motel adventure. It's a classic AD&D game dungeon with lots of weirdness and magical flourishes, and plenty of unconventional problem-solving exercises. My one reservation is that it may be too tough for novices; unless they are very careful, this scenario may dampen the spontaneous exuberance of the first-time dungeoneer. "Lashan's Fall" is a nifty dungeon with a mystery ("Say, whatever happened to that other party that came in here?") and a loony monster that may not necessarily rip into the PCs at the first opportunity, thus providing an unconventional role-playing opportunity to parley with a real boogie-man.

Another fine section is "Books of the Forgotten Realms," a 33-page treatment of several magical tomes. Each of these suggests a variety of adventures, and sparkles with the fantasy flavor of AD&D game magic at its very best. The appearance of each book is described, along with its history and background, including the original owner and the series of characters subsequently involved with the tome. The contents of each spell book are given, along with one or more unique spells that will stimulate the acquisitive itch of power-hungry magic-user PCs. Finally, there's a two-page index, an oft-omitted but priceless aid for DM reference.

The 96-page *Cyclopedia of the Realms* begins with a fair treatment of time, names, language, and currency in the Realms, and with a less-satisfying treatment of gods and religion. Veterans brought up on the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ *Cyclopedia*, *Legends & Lore*, and other more robust fantasy theologies will find this thin fare. Though the major archetypes and game elements are covered, there's little detail, motivation, or game information provided for the deities. More compatibility with the published AD&D game books would have been nice; a few Finnish and Celtic gods appear, along with Tyr of the Norse pantheon, but most of the gods are unique to the Realms. However, you can't do everything in two booklets, and vague religions could be a virtue

for experienced DMs and players who want to stick with the established gods of their house campaigns. An excellent appendix, a list of NPCs presented as a census of the village of Shadowdale, offers a fine sense of the tone of the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting.

The rest of the book, 75 pages worth, is an encyclopedic, alphabetic listing of important places, races, nations, cultures, character classes, and organizations of the Realms. Encyclopedic presentations have some advantages for reference, but often

read about as well as encyclopedias, and may represent a timid unwillingness to struggle with other more complex but more coherent organizational schemes — for example, a series of chapters, each dealing with a specific topic like major races or cultures. This book is not too bad, however, as long as you treat the longer entries as essays, and don't worry about reading all the skimpy citations concerning minor towns and countries.

Concerning places, the best entries are several large- and medium-sized cities and towns, complete with maps and keys to the major establishments. Detail is understandably scanty, but the titles and types of businesses as listed in the map keys are adequate improvisational inspirations for an experienced DM. There is also a good treatment of Shadowdale, a village proposed as the setting for novice campaigners.

The treatment of races is unexceptional, though there is a nice touch with the elves, who are apparently abandoning the land for some mysterious reason, conveniently leaving plenty of derelict settlements, habitations, and dungeons just begging for genteel looting and grave-robbing — er, excuse me, I meant to say "adventuring." The treatments of nations and cultures are also understandably superficial, given space constraints; Cormyr, the nation receiving the most attention, gets only three pages. However, the few details given are at least plausible and are often good hooks for adventuring.

The entries on the various character classes describe their roles in the Realms setting and offer role-playing suggestions. For example, the thief class is rationalized as employing its skills only in the adventuring context, thereby removing the immoral, antisocial elements of the thief's role. I also sympathize with Elminster's deprecatory comments on dogmatic cavaliers and paladins. Elminster gratefully observes that the more fanatic examples generally die young, while the more tolerant and understanding of their ilk are generally more successful in achieving their aims.

The strongest element of this encyclopedic section is the treatment of various organizations like Iron House (a dwarven clan), the Knight of the North and Knights of the Shield, harpers, the Lord's Alliance, adventuring, mercenary, and merchant companies, the Shadow Thieves, and the Zhentarim (a criminal network and worshipers of Bane: a feared, evil god). These organizations are backdrops for intrigue and adventure, and provide background material for PC and NPC role-playing development. Skim through a couple of these entries; they're quite good.

Four full-color, 34" x 22" maps are included. Two are combined to form a large-scale (1" = 90 miles) map of the western half of the vast Realms continent. The other two combined provide a more detailed (1" = 30 miles) map of the regions featured in this campaign pack.

Artistically, they're decent but unimpressive. Graphically, they're exceptionally clear and useful. The best part is the omission of hex grids from the maps, and the inclusion of two transparent plastic hex grids for figuring distances and travel rates. These ingenious devices are sure to please mappers and travel freaks.

So, how does the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting shape up as a campaign setting? The physical space is vast and varied — just what the official AD&D game campaign needs. It includes, at least in plan, the AD&D game Oriental world — a real plus, given the exceptional quality of the Oriental campaign materials. Detailed geography, climate, ecology, and so forth must await development in subsequent sourcebooks.

Political and social institutions likewise need further elaboration in supplements, but the basic concepts devised by Greenwood and colleagues are appealing and perfectly in keeping with honored AD&D game conventions. For example, the idea of royal charters for established adventuring companies is perfect for PC parties. The names of several adventuring companies described in the text will suggest the tone and charm of this conception: The Company of the Wolf; The Four; Halflings, Inc.; The Hunt; The Knights of Myth Drannor; Mane's Band; The Men of the Basilisk; The Savage Seven; and, The Purple Flame.

The important guiding themes of any campaign — good vs. evil, megavillains, depraved gods, quests, loot, power — are all available in profusion. The Cult of Dragons marshals the Evil Dragonkind of the Forsaken North against hapless villagers. Zhengyi, Witch King of Vaasa, rules his burgeoning empire of ruthless conquest from the brooding solitude of Castle Perilous. The haughty and arrogant Red Wizards of Thay employ their awesome sorcerous powers in their expansionistic and imperialistic policy of swallowing up neighbor states. The Black Lords Altar is served by Patriarch Fzoul Chembryl and the scheming clergy of the cruel god Bane. These elements need further elaboration,

but even as they stand, they are flavorful and evocative.

The sense of wonder — the aura and tone of the alien and fantastic — is relatively conventional and restrained, but true to the style and spirit of most AD&D game campaigns. Many other campaign settings are more bizarre and distinctive (see, for example, the DRAGONLANCE campaign and last month's "Role-playing Reviews" column), but such a setting would be inappropriate for the official AD&D game campaign. In general, the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting does a commendable job in staying close to the basic traditions of the AD&D game and developing them in clever and original ways.

And what is the prospect for future supplements? Well, FR1 *Waterdeep and the North* was released in October 1987, a city pack by Ed Greenwood, and FR2 *Moonshae* by Doug Niles has been released: a sourcebook for the setting of his novel *Darkwalker on Moonshae*, "replete with unicorns, druids, and bards, and including several short adventures," says the catalog. In this industry, product support must be timely, and bimonthly publication is quite timely. As a result, top designers, not green freelancers, have been assigned for follow-up products — a good sign that TSR intends to do right by the Realms.

Evaluation: This setting is well-conceived as the official AD&D game campaign setting — vast enough to accommodate a multitude of house campaigns and variable playing styles, and true to the established traditions of a decade of AD&D game campaigning. The component quality is quite satisfying — particularly the maps and the nifty transparent hex grids — and the presentation is concise, readable, and appealing. Because of the vast scope of the project, this package often lacks the detailed development of specific topics featured by other, more narrowly focused products (the Gazetteers, for example), but certain sections — notably the recent news and rumors, the dungeons, and the magical tomes — are earnest and excellent tokens of the potential of the campaign setting.

Short and sweet

Whimsy Cards, by Jonathan Tweet and Mark Rein•hagen [sic]. Lion Rampant, \$3.95. A truly original FRPG concept — a set of cards distributed to players at the GM's discretion, designed to allow the players to intervene directly in the GM's control of the narrative.

For example, Penny Forthright, a CALL OF CTHULHU® game investigator, turns a corner and stumbles into a soul-eating demon. Penny's player hands the GM her "Tables Turn" Whimsy card, which reads "Something in the situation reverses, an advantage turns into a disadvantage, a disadvantage turns into an advantage. It is a surprise to all." Penny's player says, "Lo and behold! This soul-eating demon is not (to Penny's surprise) intent on eating Penny's soul, but is indeed seeking a human's aid in locating an escaped criminal demon, with the intent of returning said fugitive to his home dimension for a fair trial. Please, Mr. Game Master, isn't that an ever-so-charming dramatic reversal?"

Mr. Game Master grins wryly at the irony, then says, "Well, I'm not sure you've got the tone quite right, but I like the idea. Okay, how's this: The demon is looking for Penny's aid, but the task he proposes is less noble than Penny would like. Give me a minute to work out the details."

Whimsy Cards can be used with any FRPG. Their successful use depends on the player's ingenuity in proposing appropriate interventions and on the GM's comfort with improvising responses to unanticipated shifts in plot and character motivation. I really like the idea of the cards, but they may be appropriate only for fairly sophisticated gamers or folks with a strong dramatic and improvisational flair. Since the cards are so inexpensive, and have only four pages of rules, trying them is not much of a risk. They are available from Lion Rampant, P.O. Box 621, Northfield MN 55057.

WARHAMMER 40,000: Rogue Trader, by Rick Priestley. Games Workshop Ltd., \$30.00. This is colossal, stupendous, and spectacular. This game volume contains a number of diverse elements: orcs and dwarves in space, ultra-high-tech Eldar and the Craft-Worlds, Mutants, Psychers, The Tenth Millennium of the Eternal Emperor's reign over Known Space, the Adeptus Terra, the Inquisition, the Adeptus Astra Telepathicus, the Legiones Astartes (Space Marines), Rogue Traders, Abhumans, the Ork Domains, Tyranids, and the Hive-Fleets, to name a few.

Simply referred to as *Warhammer Forty-Kay*, this is a science-fiction/fantasy miniatures system analogous to GW's *Warhammer Fantasy Rattle Rules*, except *Forty-Kay* is a squad-sized-unit skirmish system with fewer miniatures on the table, and more flexible and dispersed unit maneuvering.

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game setting to make my blood boil. It doesn't contain role-playing rules, but who cares? If Games Workshop doesn't publish some real soon, I'll make up my own. Forty-Kay cheerfully plunders dungeon-style fantasy for archetypal elements and themes, yet offers a galactic panorama and science-fictional sense-of-place that reminds me of *Dune* and other SF epics.

My critical faculties are temporarily out-of-service, I'm afraid; I like this so much that I must be disqualified as a coherent reviewer. You'd better go look at it yourself, or you're going to think I've lost my marbles. The visuals are stunning. The tone and conception of the campaign universe are brilliant. Paying \$30 for a 288-page hardback book seems a bit much at first glance, but then again folks gladly buy 128-page AD&D game hardback books for \$15 each. This is available from Games Workshop Ltd., Chewton Street, Hill Top, Eastwood, Nottingham, NG16 3HY, United Kingdom; or Games Workshop U.S., 8920 Route 108, Columbia MD 21045, United States.

I13 Adventure Pack I, by various authors. TSR, Inc., \$12.00. Here, perhaps, is the future of the module market. This is a good collection of short, stand-alone AD&D game adventures by a number of established and promising designers. The plots, tones, and flavors of these adven-

tures are particularly original and offbeat. My favorites are Allen Varney's "Steaks" (a compact, charming, nicely staged gaming vignette with a clever central plot device) and Paul Jaquays' "Terror in Skytumble Tor" (a sharp little adventure with clever plot devices and vivid NPCs in a derelict sky castle that is ponderously tumbling end-over-end toward the earth).

The module format has always been the most practical for presenting an FRPG adventure, but reading long modules is painfully dull, and 64 pages of the same tone and style can make the GM's task even more tedious. These short adventures are a good length — long enough to present an idea, but short enough to read straight through without introducing narcolepsy. Also, the varied tones — some light and clever, some earnest and heroic — make for a more pleasant reading experience. And the adventures here are comfortably conventional in their AD&D game feel, and can easily be slipped into a typical house campaign.

Citybook™ III: Deadly Nightside, by various authors. Blade/Flying Buffalo Inc., \$10.00. This another volume in the excellent Citybook series of generic FRPG supplements featuring colorful urban establishments with richly imagined and illustrated NPCs and stimulating scenario

Mike Stackpole, project coordinator and contributor, has assembled the typical collection of preeminent free-lance game designers, professional fantasy writers, and other cheerful Citybook contributors, including Greg Gorden, Warren Spector, Allen Varney, Scott Haring, Paul Jaquays, Jennifer Roberson, Dennis L. McKiernan, and Ed Andrews. Liz Danforth provides excellent interior illustrations, as usual. Previous Citybook projects have always been original, offbeat, and well-written; *Citybook III* is no exception. This is available from Blade/Flying Buffalo Inc., P.O. Box 1210, Scottsdale AZ 85252.

Who reviews the reviewers?

I'm honestly interested in your thoughts about these game reviews. Despite the confident, assertive tone of my commentary, I am (like most writers) profoundly skeptical of my own insights and lucidity. (In other words, if I'm barking up the wrong trees, I hope someone will mention it to me.)

My mailing address is: Ken Rolston, Box 28, Tabor NJ 07878 (no phone calls, please). My nightmarish schedule probably precludes responding personally to your letters, but I'd love to have my mistakes and misjudgments pointed out to me, along with a nurturing dose of back-patting, if you feel it is appropriate. ☐

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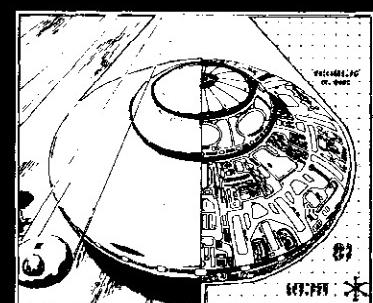
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CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is offered as a service to our readers around the world. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on 8½" x 11" paper. The contents of each listing should be short, succinct, and under 150 words long.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following information, in the following order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, brochures, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements run the risk of not being considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Domestic and foreign conventions are welcome.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility!

Convention listings should be mailed by the copy deadline date to Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. Copy deadline dates are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. For example, the copy deadline for the July 1988 issue is the last Monday of May 1988. Plan ahead; early listings pay off!

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, **please contact us immediately!** For any questions or changes related to this column, please call either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at TSR, Inc., at (414) 248-3625.

* indicates Canadian convention.

• indicates European convention.

CONFUSION, January 15-17

This science-fiction convention will be held at the Southfield Hilton in Southfield, Mich. Room prices are \$55 per night. Guests of honor in-

clude Joe Haldeman, Larry Tucker, Marta Randall, and David Cherry. Membership fees are \$20 at the door. Write to: AASFA/CONFUSION, P.O. Box 8284, Ann Arbor MI 48107.

PROJECT...GENESIS II, January 17

This PATCO protoriginal convention celebrates its second incarnation at Chiminello's Hall, 2221 N. Weber in Fresno, Calif. Featured tournaments include AD&D®, BATTLETECH®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, CHAMPIONS™, and other games. Open gaming will be available, along with a swap meet for those wishing to buy, sell, or trade old games or gaming material (table space required). Preregistration is \$3 before January 10, or \$5 thereafter. Tables for the Swap Meet are \$10 for an entire table and \$6.50 for half a table. Write to: PATCO, c/o Phil Pittz, 5415 E. Washington, Fresno CA 93727; or call: (209) 255-4682.

NEW ORLEANS SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FESTIVAL, January 22-24

This science-fiction and fantasy event will take place at the Pallas Suite Hotel, Canal Boulevard, in New Orleans, La. George R.R. Martin, George Alec Effinger, and others are guests of honor. Registration is \$15 at the door. Write to: NEW ORLEANS SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FESTIVAL, P.O. Box 791089, New Orleans LA 70179-1089; or call: (504) 482-0908.

PANDEMONIUM 5, January 23-24

This two-day gaming convention will be held at the Hub Cafeteria of the Ryerson Polytechnical Institute at 350 Victoria Street in Toronto, Ont., Canada. Events include FRPG tournaments, board games, miniatures competitions, auctions, dealers, and more. Preregistration fees are \$10 for Saturday, \$8 for Sunday, or \$15 for both days; fees must be received before January 7. At-the-door fees are \$12 for Saturday, \$10 for Sunday, and \$20 for both days. There are no tournament fees. For details, write to: The General Staff, P.O. Box 425, Station A, Downsview, Ontario, CANADA M3M 3A8; or call: Doug Richards at (416) 598-1693, or Dave Simpson at (416) 597-1934.

CHIMERACON V, January 29-31

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the University of North Carolina campus in Chapel Hill, N.C. Guests of honor include Nancy Springer, Hugo and Nebula Awards winner Orson Scott Card, Colleen Doran, Allen Wold, Lisa Cantrell, and Mark van Name. Events include a costume workshop and contest (costumed guests receive \$1 off admission for Saturday registration), an Outer Limits Cantina Variety Show, filksinging, gaming, panels, and more. Admission prices are \$6 per day, \$11 for two days, or \$15 for all three days. Preregistration for all three days is \$12.50. Write to: 15-A University Gardens, Chapel Hill NC 27514; or call: (919) 933-3003.

JACKSONVILLE SKIRMISHES '88

January 29-31

SKIRMISHES presents the grand opening of this role-playing/wargaming convention at the Jacksonville Hotel in Jacksonville, Fla. Events include: AD&D®, TRAVELLER®, STAR FLEET BATTLES, and CAR WARS® game tournaments; Napoleonic; board gaming; a dealers' room; a costume contest; SCA demonstrations; and, other role-playing and historical gaming events. For hotel reservations, call: (904) 398-8800. Registration is \$18 for the entire weekend. Send registration fees to receive a program booklet. For further information, contact: SKIRMISHES, P.O. Box 2097, Winter Haven FL 33883; or call: (813) 294-9166.

REDCON 88, February 5-7

The Royal Military College of Canada will hold its second annual Wargames Conference at the Cadet Recreation Centre on the campus grounds in Kingston, Ont., Canada. Scheduled events include SQUAD LEADER®, BATTLETECH®, microarmor, AD&D®, and BATTLESYSTEM™ game tournaments, with plenty of open gaming. Retail vendors and board-game company representatives will introduce, promote, and sell their products. Registration is \$5 (Canadian) for the entire conference, and must be filed before January 15. For details, send an SASE to: RMC Wargames Club, c/o OCdt. Dray, 1 Sqn., Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario, CANADA K7K 5L0.

WARCON '88, February 5-7

Texas' oldest gaming convention will be held at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. The featured event is an RPGATM Network AD&D® Open Team Tournament. Other events include board games, miniatures events, and role-playing game tournaments, a dealers' room, and 24-hour open gaming. Preregistration is \$8, or \$11 at the door. The guest of honor is Larry Bond (coauthor of Red Storm Rising and designer of the HARPOON® game). Write to: MSC NOVA, Box J-1, Memorial Student Center, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77844; or call: (409) 845-1515.

DALCON 88, February 6-7

This annual wargaming convention will be held in the McInnes Room of the Student Union Building, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Events include role-playing, board, and miniatures games, along with a miniatures painting contest. Prizes will be awarded in several of these events. Registration is \$4 by mail or \$7 at the door. Day passes will also be made available. Write to: DalSim, c/o the Enquiry Desk, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, CANADA, B3H 4J2; or call: Dan DelVilano at (902) 469-7545.

THE EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN, February 6

Sponsored by the Southern Illinois University Strategic Games Society, the EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN will be held in the Student Center Renaissance Room on the Southern Illinois University Campus in Carbondale, Ill. Events run from 9 AM to midnight. Scheduled programs include: an AD&D® game tournament; a DIPLOMACY tournament; MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, BATTLETECH®, CAR WARS®, and other game tournaments; open gaming; and, a fantasy-miniatures painting contest. Preregistration is \$3 for the day, or \$5 the day of the event. For details, write to: SIU Strategic Games Society, Office of Student Development, 3rd Floor, Student Center, Southern Illinois University at

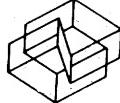
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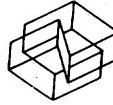
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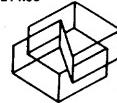
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**DUNDRACON XII FANTASY
ROLE-PLAYING AND PLAY-BY-MAIL
GAME CONVENTION, February 12-16**

Held at the Oakland Airport Hilton Hotel in Oakland, Calif., this gaming convention will feature a variety of events including tournament and open gaming, a miniatures-painting contest, SCA demonstrations, a flea market, and a dealers' room. This year's events will also include a play-by-mail Mini-Con featuring a number of guests and live versions of favorite PBM games. Registration fees are \$20 until February 1, and \$25 thereafter (or \$10 per day). For details, write to: DUNDRACON, 386 Alcatraz, Oakland CA 94618.

GENGHIS CON IX, February 12-14

Join the Horde as GENGHIS CON IX moves to winter quarters at the Airport Hilton in Denver, Colo. This convention is sponsored by the Denver Gamers Association and the Colorado Military Historians. Events include all varieties of board, miniatures, computer, and role-playing games. The ever-popular game auction will make another appearance this year. Special gaming events include competitions in VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC, TITAN, CIVILIZATION, KING-MAKER, and ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER. The Colorado Military Historians will also sponsor one of the first qualifying rounds for the WRG Ancients National Championships. Registration is \$12 until January 31, and \$15 thereafter. Write to: Denver Gamers Association, P.O. Box 2945, Littleton CO 80161.

ORCCON 11, February 12-15

Brought to you by STRATEGICON, the people who also brought you ORIGINS '86, this gaming convention will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. Role-playing, wargame, computer game, and family board game tournaments are offered, as well as various seminars and demonstrations, a flea market, a game auction, and an exhibitors' area. Write to: ORCCON 11, c/o DTI, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808; or call: (213) 420-3675.

FAL*CON I, February 19-21

This gaming convention will be held at the Howard Johnson Convention Center in Meridian, Miss. Guests of honor will include Steve Jackson, Dave Miller, Phil Foglio, and Robert Asprin. Scheduled events include an RPGATM Network AD&D® game tournament, open gaming, a video room, blacksmithing, cloth-weaving, and pottery demonstrations, an art show and auction, a masquerade party, an SCA demonstration, and much more. Membership rates are \$20 for the entire weekend. Interested gamers may send their checks, money orders, or information requests to: FAL*CON, P.O. Box 4707, Meridian MS 39304.

NOT-A-CON, February 20-21

This mini-convention will be held at the Palmetto Ball Room on the Clemson University campus in Clemson, S.C. Activities will include an AD&D® game tournament, a CHAMPIONSTM game tournament, and a miniatures-painting contest. Registration fees are \$3, with \$2 fees for tournament play. There is a \$1 fee for up to four entries in the miniatures-painting contest, with each additional entry over four costing \$0.50. All pre-registration fees must be postmarked no later than January 15. For details, send an SASE to: Clemson University Adventurers' Guild, Box

9962, University Station, Clemson SC 29631; or call: (803) 656-6650.

CONTEMPLATION 88, February 26-28

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Ramada Inn in Columbia, Mo. Guests of honor include Jerry and Roberta Pournelle, and Larry Niven. J.R. Daniels is the artist guest of honor, and Keith Berdak is fan guest of honor. Events include an art show and auction, panels, a masquerade, a video room, a hucksters' room, and games. Membership fees are \$14. Write to: CONTEMPLATION, P.O. Box 7242, Columbia MO 65205.

CREATURECON 88, February 26-28

Sponsored by The Creature Shop, this gaming convention will be held at the Ice House Ball Room at the corner of W. Eldorado and Van Dyke in Decatur, Ill. Featured events include two miniatures-painting contests, RPGATM Network tournaments (including AD&D®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, and TRAVELLER® games), open gaming, fantasy drawing contests, science-fiction games, a dealers' room, an art show, an auction, lectures on fantasy gaming concepts and on writing fantasy adventures, and a number of guest authors and lecturers. Registration is \$15 through February 20, and \$20 at the door. Preregistration fees must be paid in advance by check or money order, made payable to CREATURECON 88. For tickets or details, send an SASE to: CREATURECON, P.O. Box 2875, Decatur IL 62526; or call: (217) 875-1316.

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE 88

February 26-28

Sponsored by the University of Saskatchewan Gamers Club and The Wizard's Corner, this convention will be held in Room 148 of the Phorvaldson Building on the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. Events include an AD&D® game tournament with a grand prize of \$50, a STAR FLEET BATTLES tournament with a prize of \$50 and a figurine painting contest. The entrance fees are: \$80 for a team of four in the AD&D game tournament; \$10 for the STAR FLEET BATTLES tournament; and, \$1 for the figurine painting contest. The prizes for these events depend upon the number of teams entered. Write to: The Wizards Corner, 801 C Broadway Avenue, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, CANADA S7N 1B5; or call: (306) 934-4777.

BASHCON '88, March 4-6

Sponsored by the University of Toledo Benevolent Adventurers' Strategic Headquarters, this sixth annual event will be held on the third floor of the University of Toledo Main Campus Student Union in Toledo, Ohio. This convention will feature a host of events, including a games auction, a miniatures-painting contest, a game exhibitors' and dealers' room, an RPGATM Network AD&D® game tournament, an AADA CAR WARS® tournament, a schedule of movies, as well as more than 120 other role-playing, board, and miniatures gaming features. Steve Jackson is the guest of honor. Send an SASE to: Student Activities Office, UT-BASH, BASHCON, 2801 W. Bancroft Street, Toledo OH 43606; or call: (419) 537-4654.

JAXCON SOUTH 12, March 4-6

This 12th annual gaming convention will be held at the Jacksonville Hotel on the Riverwalk in Jacksonville, Fla. Numerous miniatures, board game, and role-playing game events will be held, as well as a large dealers' room, a flea market, tournaments, movies, door prizes, and more. Registration is \$18 at the door. Dealers should

write to: JAXCON SOUTH 12, Dept. D, P.O. Box 4423, Jacksonville FL 32201. Write to: JAXCON SOUTH, Dept. A., P.O. Box 4423, Jacksonville FL 32201; or call: (904) 772-9040 between 7 and 9 p.m. only.

CALCON III, March 11-13

This role-playing, board, and miniatures-gaming convention will be held at the Glenmore Inn in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Sponsored events include a major AD&D® tournament (\$250 first-place prize offered), TUNNELS & TROLLSTM games, a Monty Hall Bake-off Extravaganza, CALL OF CTHULHU® games, and a host of minor tournaments. Other events include an auction, miniatures competitions, a miniatures-painting contest, LAZER TAG® games, intros and demos of many RPG systems, and much more. Registration is \$5 until January 1; \$7 until March 1; or \$10 thereafter. For details, write to: CALCON III, P.O. Box 204, Station "M," 220 4 Avenue SE, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA, T2P 2H6.

TOTAL CONFUSION 2, March 11-13

The second-annual TOTAL CONFUSION game convention will be held at Clark University in Worcester, Mass. RPGATM Network events will be held for AD&D® and CALL OF CTHULHU® games. Regular events include 10 "unlimited" AD&D game events, and CHAMPIONSTM, DC™ HEROES, CAR WARS®, and numerous other board and role-playing game features. A miniatures-painting event, a dealers' room, seminars, 24-hour open gaming, and much more are also offered. Preregistration for all three days is \$15, or \$6 for each individual day. Registration after March 1 is \$7 per day. Write to: TOTAL CONFUSION, 151 Chandler Street, Worcester MA 01609; or call: (617) 793-0853, (617) 562-2554, or (617) 755-4207.

UMF-CON, March 13

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention takes place at the Student Center of the University of Maine in Farmington, Maine. Barry B. Longyear, the nationally known science-fiction writer, will be attending. UMF-CON features AD&D®, TOP SECRET®, RISK®, and BATTLESYSTEM™ game events, along with numerous other board and role-playing games. Registration is \$5; each game requires a \$2 entry fee. Write to: Table Gaming Club, c/o Student Life Office, Student Center, South Street, Farmington ME 04938.

DRACONIS, March 18-20

This science-fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Galt House in Louisville, Ky. Anne McCaffrey will be the guest of honor, and Julia Ecklar will be fan guest. Featured events will include the Dragon Bazaar, open gaming, filksinging, a masquerade contest, an art show and auction, panels, workshops, a LAZER TAG™ area, and a child-care center. Registration fees are \$17.50 until February 17, and \$20 thereafter. Children ages 6-12 may be registered for half price. For details, write to: DRACONIS, P.O. Box 162, Concord MA 01742.

SIMCON X, March 18-20

This convention will be held in the Wilson Commons on the University of Rochester's River Campus in Rochester, N.Y. Events include role-playing game tournaments, wargames, miniatures competitions, movies, demonstrations, and a dealers' room. Registration is \$5 before March 1, and \$10 thereafter. For details, write to: SIMCON X, P.O. Box 29142, River Station, Rochester NY 14627; or by calling: (716) 275-9379.

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The first supplement to *City-State of the Invincible Overlord*™ will be released next month: *Raiders of Ironrock*. It's unlike any role-playing game supplement you've ever seen before.

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The Adventure

The war against the insidious evil invading Calandia™ escalates. The Overlord's army is becoming increasingly dependent on the metal ore from the Leopa Mountain™ region. But, the Leopan area itself may already have fallen, as a growing number of Ironrock dwarves are disappearing without a trace.

Your lone party of advance scouts must determine the cause of these disappearances and stop the treacherous plan behind them. The fate of the city-state hangs in balance.

The Guidebook

This 32 page reference book completely details the White Peaks District of the Calandian continent. It includes statistics and background information covering the region's social customs, geography, wildlife, commerce, military, and local populations (dwarves, elves, pixies, demitrolls and men).

The Maps

The maps highlight and detail the White Peaks District and the Leopa Mountain region.

Each adventure in the *Overlord*™ series can be played separately or as part of an overall campaign. Each one released will be slightly more complex than the last, so you may start at a low skill level and build your character during the course of the campaign. The reference books will help the Gamemaster modify the adventure for his particular level game group.

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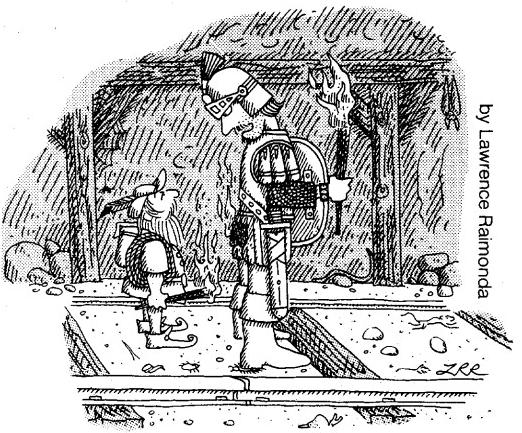


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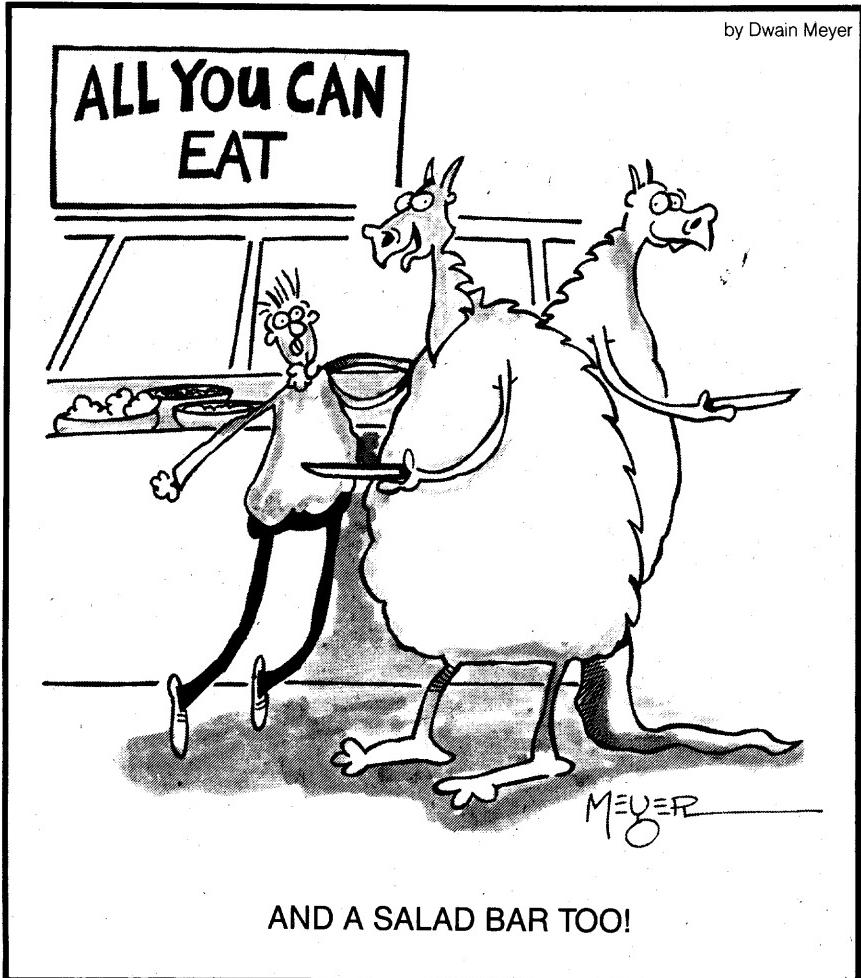
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DRAGONMIRTH

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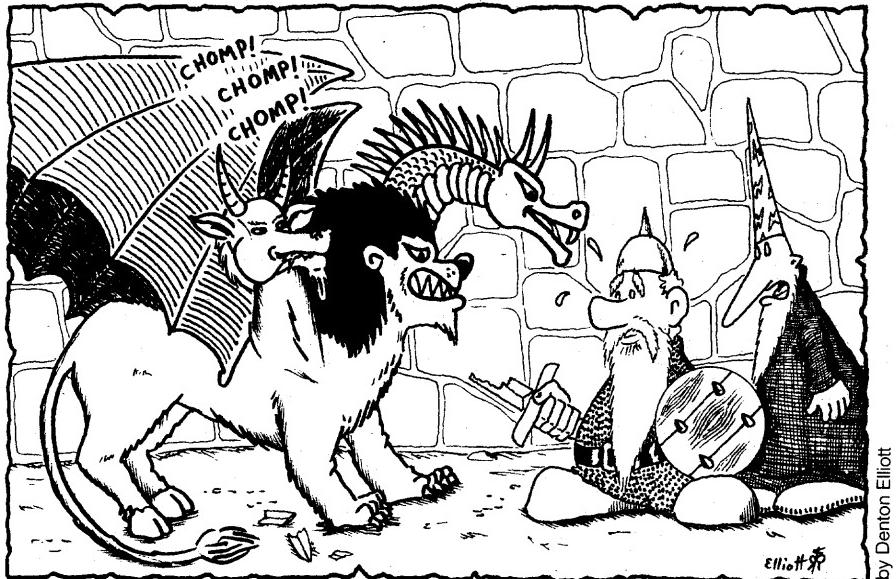


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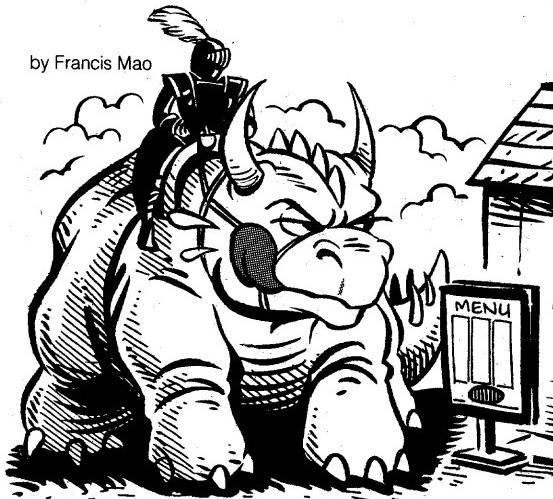
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I ALWAYS WONDERED WHAT THE GOAT'S HEAD DID!



by Francis Mao



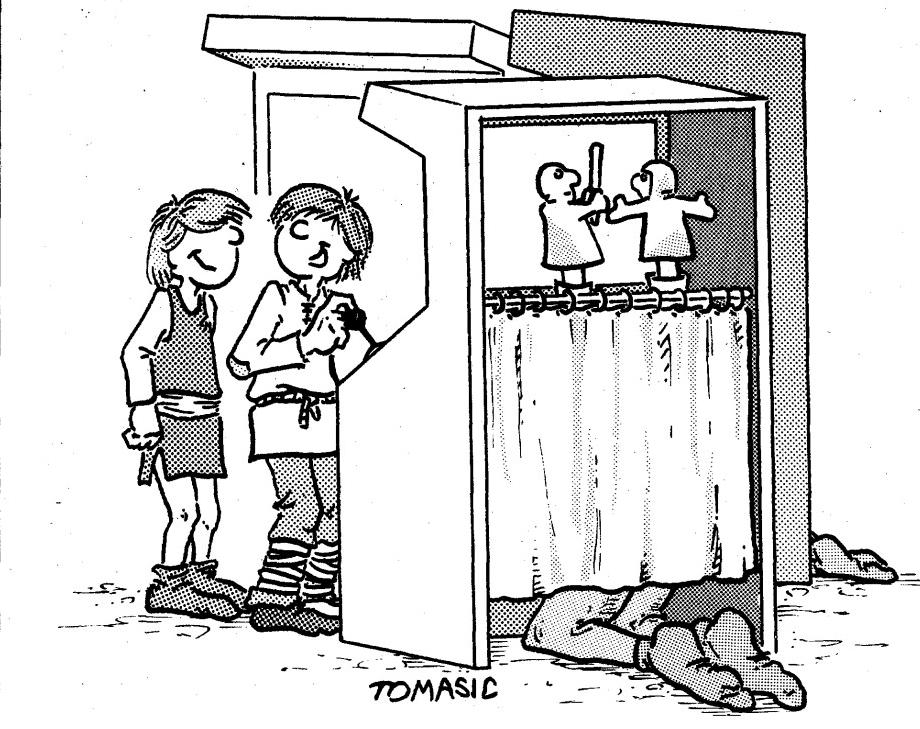
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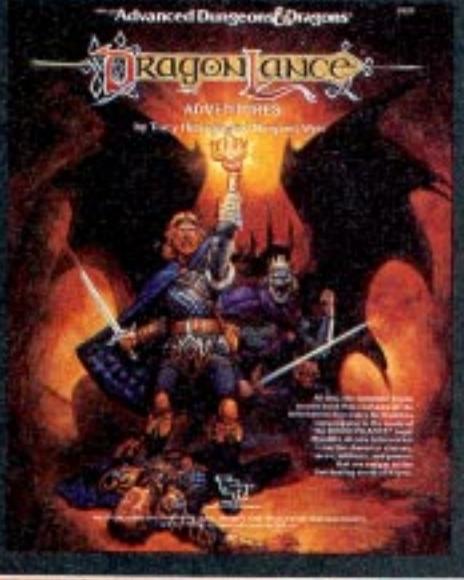
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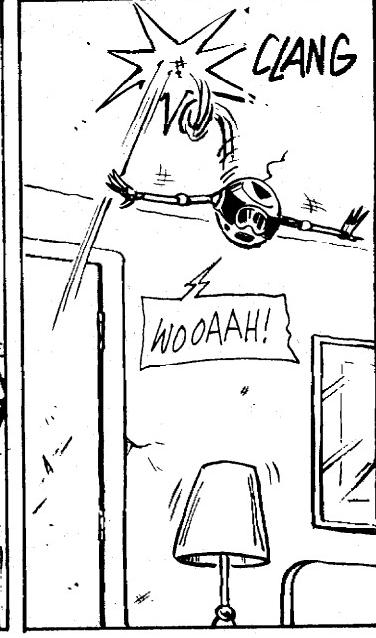
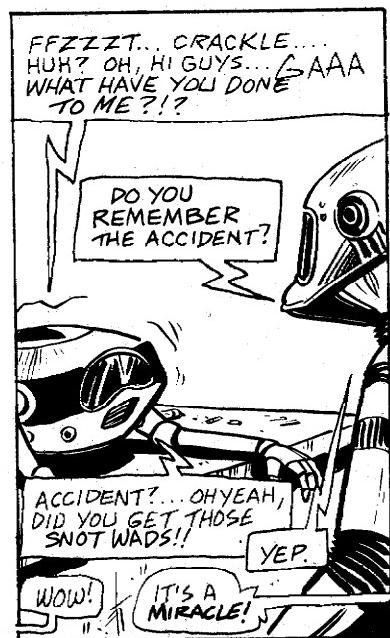
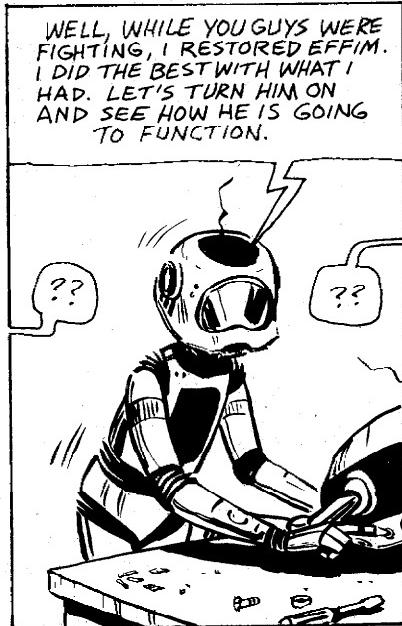
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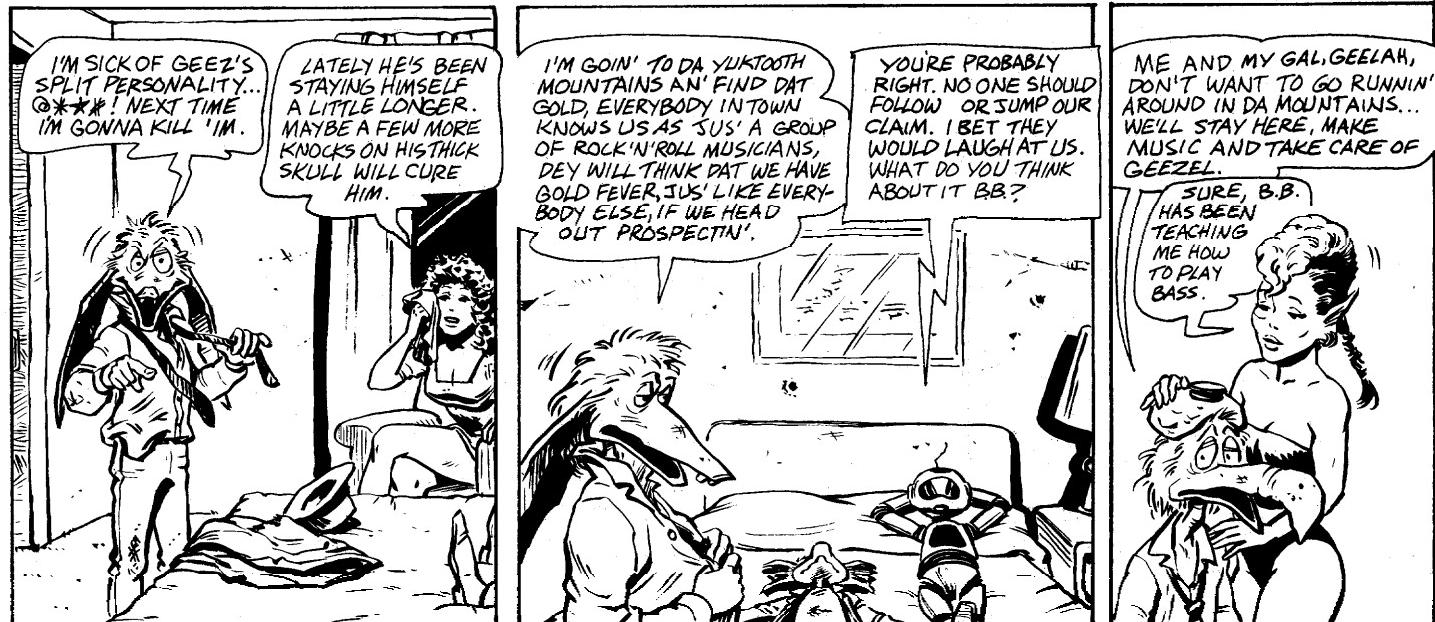
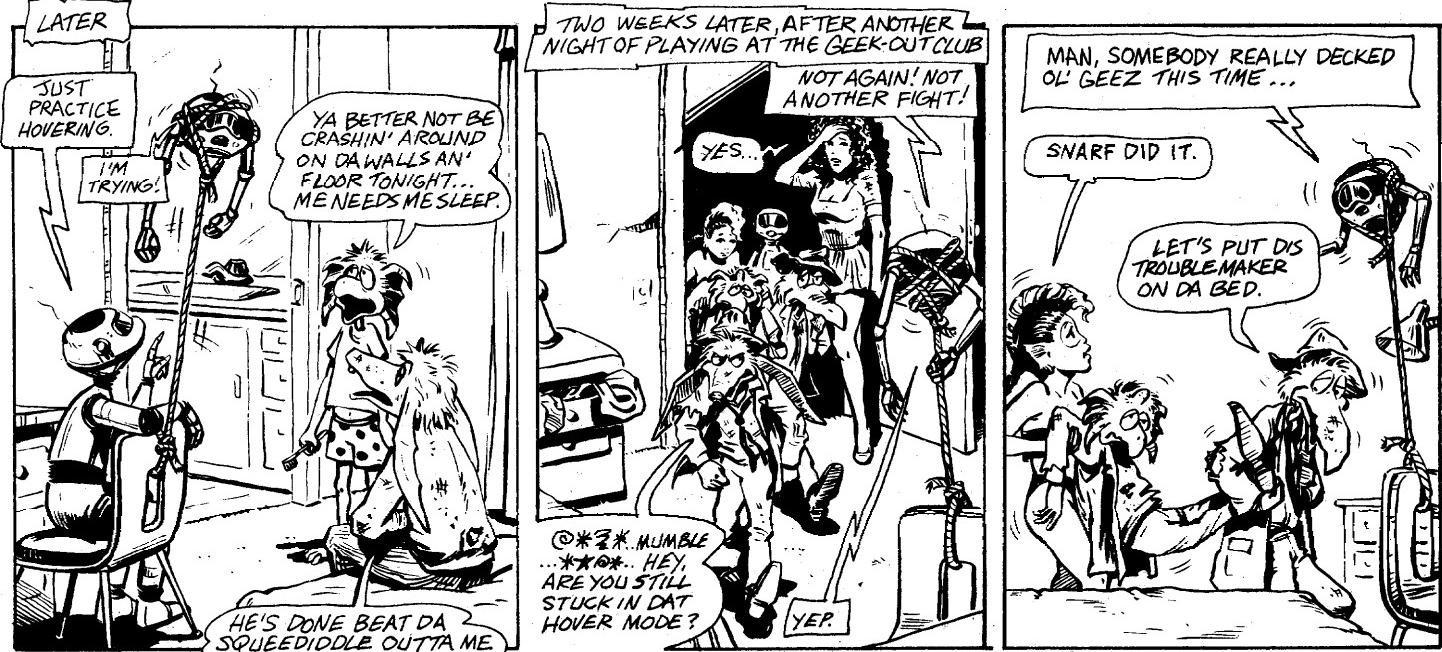
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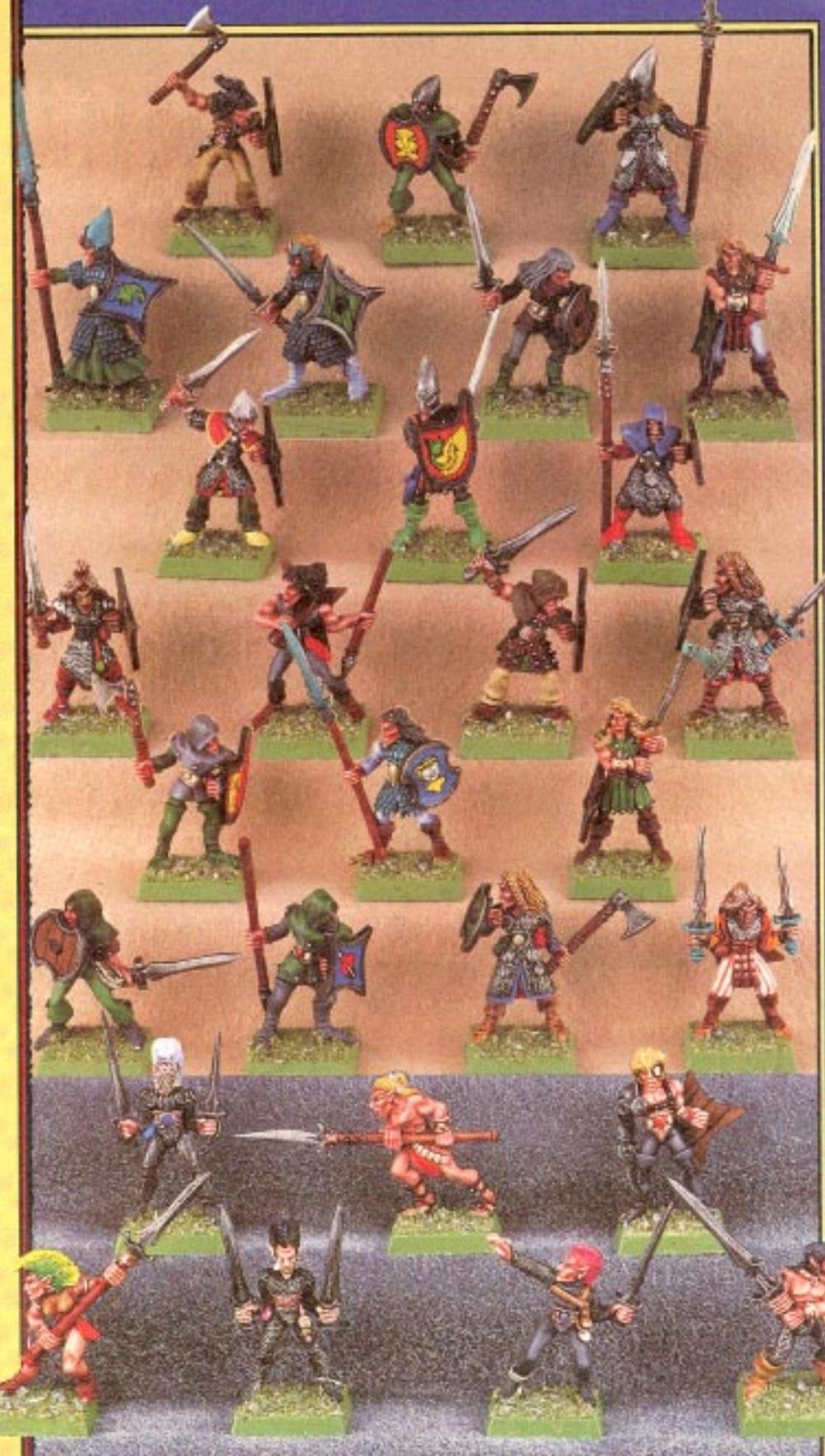


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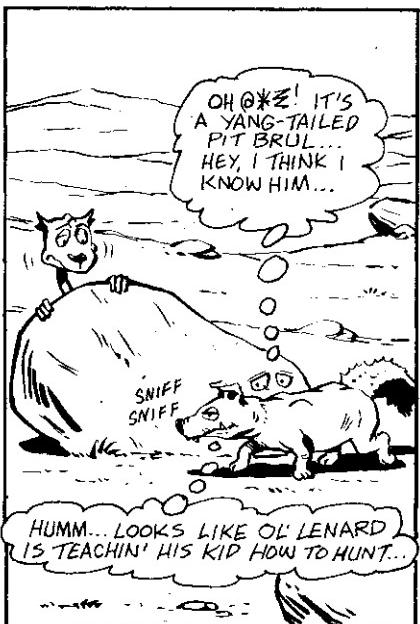
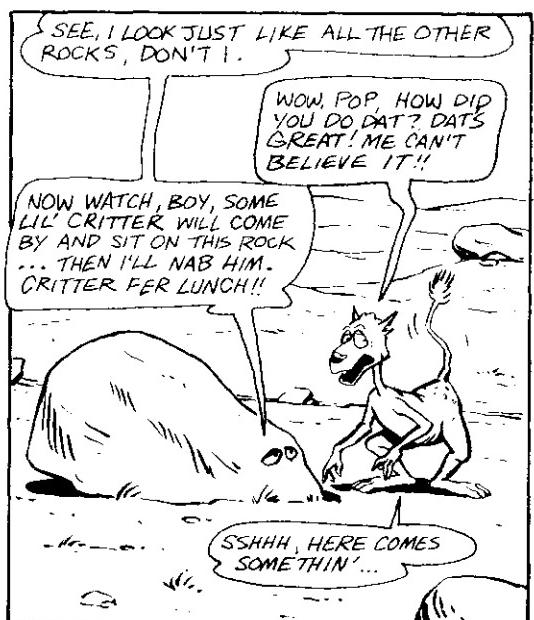
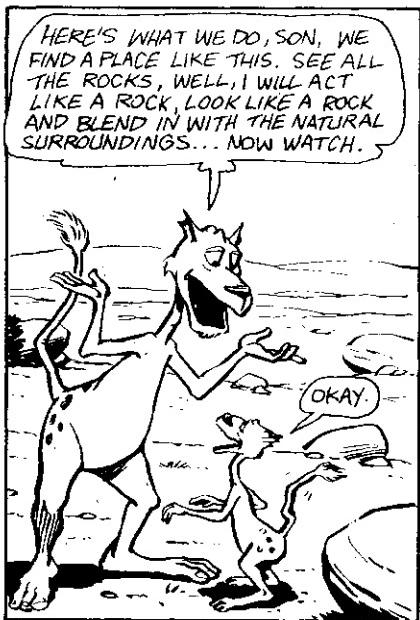
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You may think you'd have to travel to another planet to find a game convention. Finding friends who are also gamers can be a problem, too. Put your scoutsuit away and turn to the Convention Calendar in this magazine. There may be a game convention closer to your home than you'd think — and conventions are a great place to find friends who share your interests. Whether you like board-games, role-playing games, miniature wargames, or just browsing around, a game convention can be all you've hoped for. Plan to attend one soon.

The Last Word

Adventurers say the darndest things before you squash them

by Gregg Sharp

"Well, I think that's the last of them."

"Hey, what do you suppose this lever does?"

"I couldn't find any traps."

"I disarmed the trap."

"That's not really poison gas."

"Come on in! The water's fine."

"Sure glad that's over with. I'm taking off my armor."

"Okay, wishing well — make me a [insert name of a nonliving or inanimate object]."

"I hope the bridge holds up."

"What landshark?"

"Death before dishonor! Attack!"

"Things couldn't possibly get any worse."

"Of course I trust the thief. He's in our party."

"What does that mark on the door mean?"

"We really didn't need a cleric anyway."

"I'll drink it."

"I think I can make it."

"Oops."

"This is a wimp dungeon."

"Why did our torch flames turn blue?"

"What? No, I wasn't reading your module. I was just looking at the pictures."

"I go up to the lich and try to pick its pocket."

"Geez, what an ugly [insert character class name]."

"That door wasn't trapped the last time we were here."

"The minotaur's got me in a bear-hug? Great! I cast my flame strike on it."

"Brak? That's a stupid name for a barbarian."

"A wizard, huh? I throw my drink

at him."

"I don't need to read the instructions."

"It's a troll. So what?"

"This looks like a good place to set up camp."

"I open the door and rush forward with my spear set in a charge."

"I don't care. I won't retreat no matter how big or powerful an opponent is."

"They'll never find me here."

"Does a 3 save?"

"Push the red button first, then the blue one. No, wait —"

"We'll go in. We can handle anything!"

"What do you suppose that rushing noise is?"

"Oh no, not again."

"Nothing ever happens on the first level."

"Shh! There it is again."

"Naw, the DM won't hit us with anything till we get to the dungeon."

"If the merchant doesn't like it, I'll just run him through. I'll kill his guards, too."

"I don't need any help."

"I've never seen a ballista before. What's it do?"

"Hey, in there! Come on out and fight!"

"Giants: The bigger they are, the harder they fall."

"I'm a cleric. I can turn all undead."

"What luck: a demon prince! If we kill him, we get a horde of treasure and experience points."

"Oh, we won't die. The DM won't let us."

"It looks like some kind of mold."

"I've got a bad feeling about this."

"They're just kobolds."

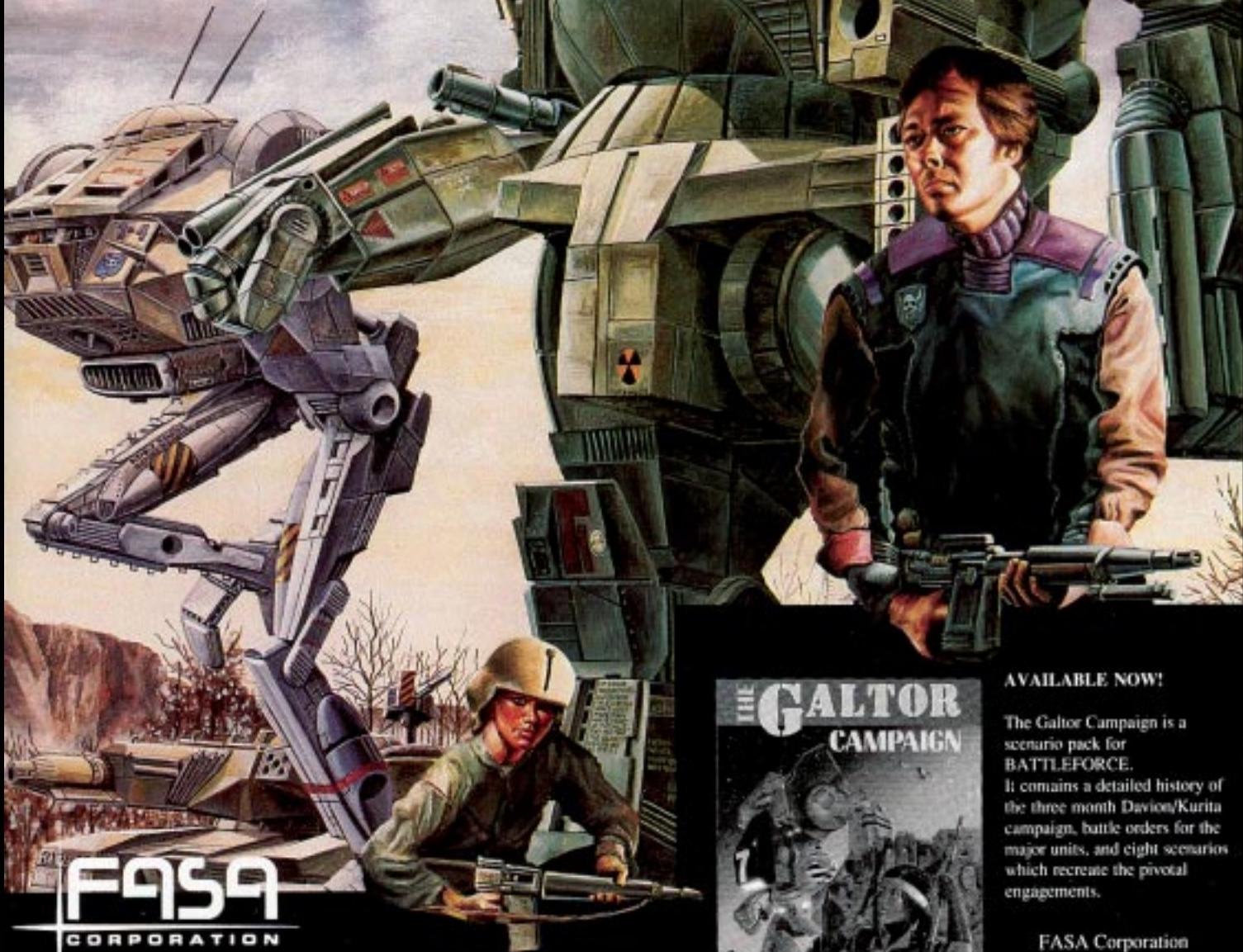
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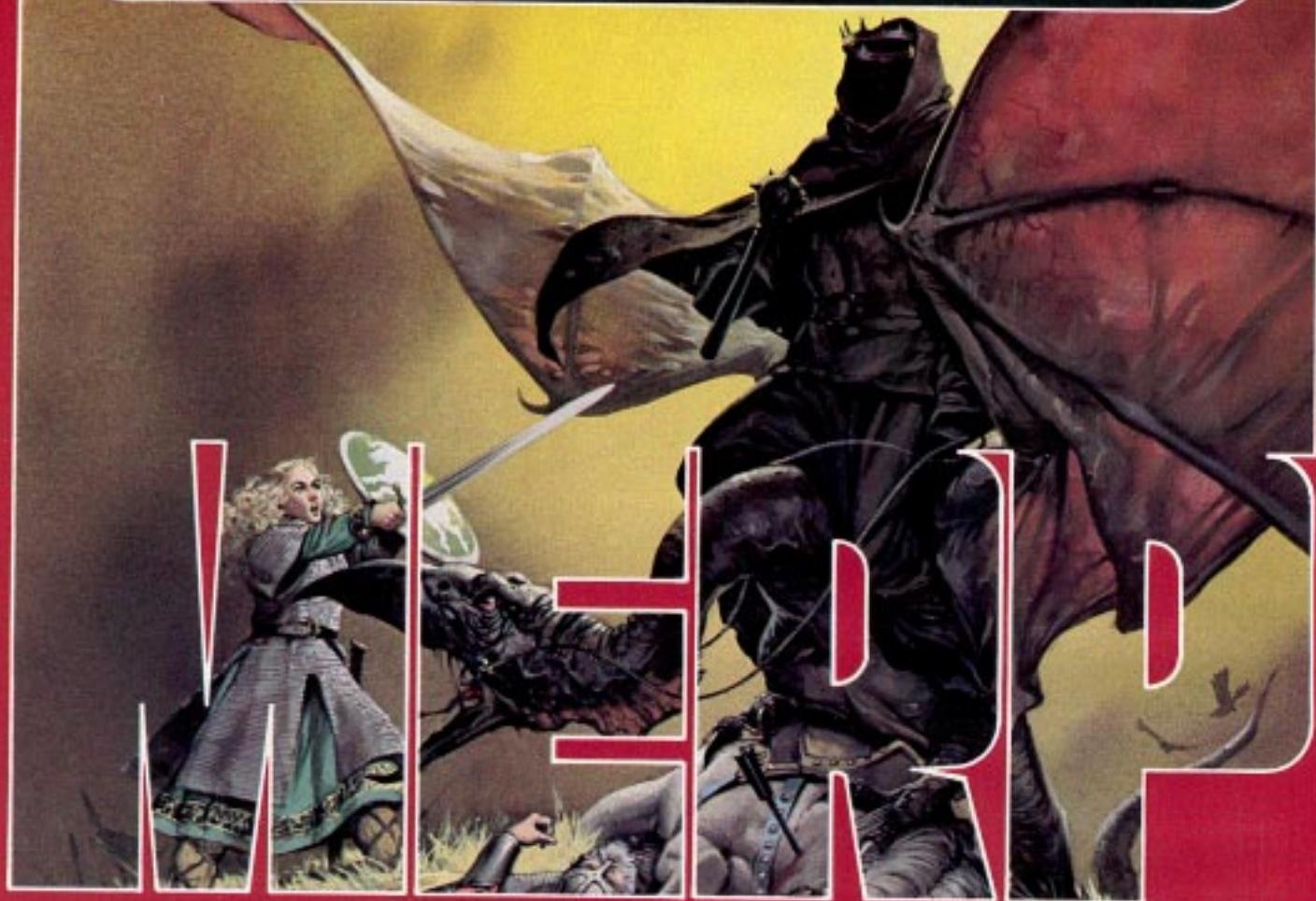
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